

# *The Patmos Vision*

*G. B. M. Clouser*

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# THE PATMOS VISION

A Study of the Apocalypse

By  
G. B. M. Clouser

Author of  
The Age Times; Coming Events;  
The Five Judgments; Greatest Law of Life;  
The True Motive for Christian Service

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## PREFACE

After hearing Lyman Beecher, a friend said to him, "How long were you preparing that great message?" and he replied, "25 years." To a similar question Dr. Nott's reply was, "30 years." A great sermon, like a tree, requires time for growth, for taking on strength and beauty, and it is not otherwise with a good book.

These pages have grown out of 33 years' work in the Christian ministry. Twenty of these were spent in the active pastorate and ten years as resident teacher in Bible Institutes, at Nyack, New York and Philadelphia. In all these years the Bible has been regarded as an inspired record of revealed truth, and the aim has been to interpret the book in accord with the divine purpose, plan and program, so easily traced on the sacred page.

Some sage has said that launching a new book was a sin against society unless one has some new material, or is able to present an old truth in a more attractive way than has yet been done. That means that when

a thoughtful person offers a new book on an old subject "there's a reason." Here are some of the reasons why we feel justified in launching another book on a theme so fully treated by able men thruout the land.

First, it is written in clear, plain English. The reader will not find one ambiguous sentence in the book. The intended meaning lies on the surface.

Brevity of statement will commend the book to many. These are busy days, and people have little time for serious reading. A large volume on a religious theme would seem to be an insult to the saints!

The large number of references will add much to the value of the book. About one thousand proof texts are quoted in support of the position taken on difficult points, and with the thought of showing the perfect unity of truth and harmony of Scripture.

The homiletic treatment of the subject is regarded as a point of real merit. The aim has been to give the material such skilful arrangement as will make the volume specially useful for pulpit and classroom work. Having taught homiletics for 20 years, we

have given the reader the benefit of any skill gained in that art.

Last but not least, the interpretation of the more obscure portions of the book in a way *to show perfect harmony with the whole fabric of revealed truth.* We choose to believe that the explanation given to the most difficult portions of the Vision, so different from the meaning usually given them, will be welcomed by every sincere seeker after truth.

Those who have followed our work in the S. S. Illustrator for 22 years, will not be surprised to find that we have regarded the Patmos Vision in the most literal fashion. It seems safe enough to conclude that God will fulfil prophecy in the future in the same way he has done in the past, and this principle has guided us thruout these studies. We believe in a literal kingdom on earth—the kingdom for which we pray. We believe in a real Messiah who is coming to David's throne as its rightful heir (Luke 1: 32); and that the events preceding his advent, recorded in chapters 6 to 19 of the Revelation, will be just as literal and tragic as those of the recent world war.

G. B. M. Clouser.

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Distinguish the dispensations and the Bible explains itself.—*Augustine.*

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand, Rev 1: 3.

If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book, Rev 22: 18, 19.

# The Patmos Vision

## THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

G. B. M. Clouser

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### INTRODUCTION

The authorship of the book of Revelation has never been questioned by an intelligent student of the Scriptures. The date of the Revelation is given by the majority of critics as A. D. 95 to 97. Iraeneus says: "It was given not long ago, almost in our own generation, at the close of Domitian's reign." Eusebius also records that, in the present under Domitian (81-96 A. D.), John the Apostle and evangelist was banished to the island of Patmos for the testimony of the divine word. There is no mention by any writer of the first three centuries of any other time or place for the writing of the Apocalypse.

## DIFFERENT SCHOOLS OF INTERPRETATION

Modern interpreters have three well defined methods for this book.

1. The Historical or continuous theory, is held by not a few. In this the Revelation is regarded as a progressive history of the fortunes of the church from the first century to the end of time.

2. The Preterist theory, in which the Revelation is regarded as almost or altogether fulfilled in the time past since it was written,—that it refers principally to the triumphs of Christianity over Judaism and Paganism, signalized in the downfall of Jerusalem and Rome.

3. The Futurist theory, which is quite distinct and wholly different from the other two schools of interpretation. In this the entire book, except the first three chapters, is regarded as future,—that it has reference to events which must follow the translation of the church, and to judgment scenes which must precede the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ on earth.

This theory is held by the leading Bible teachers of the world, and because it is more

in accord with the best known methods of Biblical interpretation. It allows a literal interpretation of prophecy and the fulfillment of all the promises concerning David's throne.

The Revelation is a book of moral government, in which God's character is revealed and the character of the realm in which he must be the acknowledged sovereign. It has to do with the Ruler, the realm and the righteous standards by which every creature in this realm must be tested. Most of the book occupies us with a series of hardening judgments that will break upon an apostate world at the close of this age. These judgments will affect the nations, Israel and the false church, called Babylon. The judgments sent upon Egypt were types of the closing scenes of this present age, a fact clearly evident when the analogy between the two events is noticed.

The Revelation treats of the establishment of Christ's kingdom on earth in answer to the Lord's prayer. And because the theatre of action is the earth, there is no mention of the translation of the church between chapters 3 and 4, where it must occur. The

book reveals God's governmental ways with the church—true and false (chapters 2 and 3, 17 and 18); with Israel (chapters 7, 12-14); with the nations (chapters 8-11, 15, 16); and the relation of these to the Millennial reign, and also to the eternal state, chapters 20-22.

The theme of the book is Christ's Lordship over the earth — *the manner in which his kingdom shall be established.* This should be constantly before the mind of the reader. It is the key that will unlock every chamber in the sacred halls of prophet lore, and illumine the darkest places in this closing chapter of revealed truth.

A few features ought to be carefully noted in order to make the pages of this book intelligent to the ordinary reader. In the first place, the things here recorded must be taken literally, for they will prove to be painfully literal. Such poetic words as "They pierced my hands and my feet; they gave me gall for my meat and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink," found a very literal fulfillment at the cross, and it will not be otherwise with the predictions of this book that stages the closing scenes

of this present evil age. The symbolism used does not rob the book of the literal and intended meaning—it only adds to the vividness of them. For example, a leader on a white horse (Rev. 6: 2) is an apt representation of a general leading an army to battle, —it is an example of the literal fact! General Washington always preferred a white charger on the field of battle.

The arrangement of certain chapters concerning Israel is another feature to be carefully noted. The seventh chapter, where a pre-view of Israel's sealing is given, is parenthetical. It comes in between the sixth and seventh seal and thus breaks the regular order of procedure as to these judgments. Chapters twelve to fourteen, where Israel's relation to the Tribulation is sketched, are also parenthetical. They are introduced between the seventh trumpet and the seven vials, and have nothing to do with the chain of events that belong to these judgments. Read the eighth chapter after the sixth, and the fifteenth after the eleventh, and you get a connected and continuous story of the three series of judgments — the seals, the trumpets and the vials—that cover the tribulation period.

And further, the Holy Spirit's method for this book is quite unique. There is a feature that, if clearly seen, will untangle all the difficult problems of the Apocalypse. It is this. At the end of chapter six, before turning to Israel in the seventh chapter, a view of the end of the tribulation is given —a picture of the things that will occur in the last hour of that dark period — the darkened sun, the falling stars, the day of judgment and the consternation of the wicked, vs. 12-17. The same thing occurs at the end of chapters 11, 14 and 16. Before proceeding with a sketch of Israel's relation to the tribulation, given in chapters 12 to 14, a picture of the return of the Lord is thrown on the screen, and the events related to it—wrath upon his enemies, judgment to a certain class of the dead, giving of rewards and destruction of the wicked, vs 15-19. At the end of ch 14, before proceeding with the vial judgments, a vivid sketch of Christ's coming to judge the nations is presented. The description of the event given here is in entire accord with that found in Joel 3: 11-17, and Matt 13: 30, 40-42. At the end of chapter 16, before proceeding with a description of the false church as

found in chapters 17 and 18, the Spirit throws upon the screen a picture of the return of Christ as a thief; the battle of Armageddon; the great earthquake, and the great hailstorm so long foretold, Isa 28: 17.

Once this method of the Spirit is clearly seen, the really hard places of the book find easy explanation, and its most difficult problems solved. After four pre-views of the second Advent and related events have been given, the actual return of Christ to earth is recorded in chapter 19. At last the day of his power has come, and the saints are with him, Ps. 110: 3. The armies of men are destroyed and their leaders are given to the burning flames, Rev. 19: 11-21.

## DIVISION OF THE BOOK

The important divisions of the book are divinely given in chapter 1, verse 19. Here the Spirit has given the key to its proper interpretation.

I. THINGS SEEN—CHRIST IN THE MIDST OF THE CHURCHES Chapter 1

II. THINGS WHICH ARE—THE SEVEN CHURCHES Chapters 2 and 3

III. THINGS WHICH SHALL BE AFTER THESE THINGS Chapters 4 to 22.

### DIVISION 1

THINGS SEEN—CHRIST IN THE MIDST OF THE CHURCHES Chapter 1

I. INTRODUCTORY vs 1-3

This Revelation was given by God to his Son, that he might “show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass.” It is therefore an expression of confiding love—taking his people into his counsels, disclosing to them the moral condition of the world around them, and the divine

judgments that must overtake every element of evil.

In this book his servants are permitted to see from his viewpoint the apostasy that abounds, and to behold in the light of the throne the inevitable consequences of sin in a moral universe. There is special blessing promised to those who read this book and contemplate its meaning.

## II. FORMAL SALUTATION vs 4-8

The Son of God is here presented under important titles,—

1. Jehovah as here presented—"which is, which was, and which is to come"—corresponds with the Hebrew name Jehovah. "Which is," present participle—which always is; "Which was", imperfect tense—which ever was; and "which is to come", participle—which always is the coming one.—Newberry.

2. "The faithful witness" v 5. This title is eloquent with meaning. It suggests, by way of contrast, the unfaithfulness of his people!

Faithful midst unfaithfulness,  
Midst darkness only light.

3. "The first begotten from among the dead", which points to the believer's shining hope, v. 5; 1 Peter 1: 3.

4. "The Prince of the Kings of the Earth", a title that speaks of his coming and reign. Mention of this title calls from the church a song of adoration and of praise. Vs. 5, 6.

His coming will have a different effect on other classes. It will call forth lamentations from the Jews (Zech. 12: 10); and wailings from the kindreds of the earth; or in other words, it will call forth *worship* from the church; *weeping* in Israel; and *wailing* among the nations of the earth, v 7.

### III. VISION OF CHRIST IN THE MIDST OF THE CHURCHES vs 9-20

The scene is on Patmos, an island in the Egean sea, to which John was banished by the Roman emperor, Domitian, A. D. 95-97.

In the Old Testament the church is symbolized as a seven-branch lampstand, Ex 25; Zech. 4. Here there are seven lamp stands with Christ in the midst as the center of gathering, and the life and unity of the church, vs 12, 13, 20.

Christ is here seen as Priest and King, fulfilling the requirement of Zech. 6: 13—“He shall be a priest upon his throne.”

As Priest, he is clothed like Aaron, and girded for service, v 13. As King, he has the following characteristics,—

1. Hair white—ancient of days, Dan. 7: 13
2. Eyes of flame—all seeing, omnicient, 19: 20
3. Feet like brass—righteous judgment, Ex. 27: 17, 18
4. Voice like many waters—clothed with authority, John 5: 27
5. Stars in right hand — gifts for the church, Eph 4: 8-12; 1 Cor 12: 18
6. Mouth, two-edged sword — quick and powerful word, Heb 4: 12; Rev 19: 15, 21.
7. Countenance as the sun—the glorified Man, Dan 10: 6; Matt 17: 2; 1 Pet 4: 13.
8. Attitude—judge of all the earth. He is here seen as the Son of Man, clothed with authority to execute judgment, shepherd his people and give rewards to his servants, John 5: 27; Acts 17: 31; Rev 22: 12.

He is given all authority because of his perfect obedience, even unto death, Phil. 2: 8. The victim of Calvary came forth from that region of death the mightiest conqueror that ever trod this earth, and he remains forever the Master in every realm, vs 17, 18. His triumph over death has given him pre-eminence among all the sons of light, and clothed him with sovereign power in the physical, moral and spiritual world, Heb. 1: 4, 8. It has given him a name which is above every name, for at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father, Phil. 2: 9-11.

## DIVISION 2

### THINGS WHICH ARE—THE SEVEN CHURCHES

#### Chapters 2 and 3

Students of this book are of one accord as to the view that the seven churches of Asia represent seven stages of the church's history. There is evidence of intelligent design in the selection of, and arrangement of the churches of Asia. The church at Rome and at Alexander were of greater importance, and noted for evil elements peculiar to that day. The selection of these show the divine purpose to picture the church in the important epochs of her history.

As a background, let us notice the condition of the world, morally and religiously, in the first century.

1. There was Judaism, which clung to the apostles for years, and which proved to be an element of opposition in every community where Christianity was carried. The "Jews religion" was in striking contrast with the new religion.

That was shadow—the new, substance  
That was form—the new, faith  
That was law—the new, life  
That was negative—the new, positive

2. Greek philosophy, with its different schools of thought. Socrates taught that no evil could come to a good man—neither in this life nor in the life to come. Plato had a practical view of things and regarded philosophy as a “way of life.” His view is called Pragmatism. What is it? What is it good for? What will it do for me? He taught four cardinal virtues — wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice. The essential things with the Greeks were—health, beauty, strength and wealth.

3. Gnosis. Oriental theosophy and magic. Asceticism. They denied the Incarnation.

4. The Nicolaitanes of the Revelation, 2:15. Their doctrine will be defined in notes on the church at Pergamos.

5. Heathenism, including tradition and superstition, with all its blinding influences and dwarfing effect.

Into this atmosphere Christianity was let down; into this soil it was planted; and the conflicts and triumphs are matters of his-

tory. Opposition from these deep-rooted beliefs was constant and often cruel; vicious and virile; but the new religion conquered them all. They are dead, but it still lives!

## I

## THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS

2: 1-7

THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH  
PENTECOST TO DEATH OF JOHN  
33-100 A. D.

Ephesus means “decline of affection”. It represents the church in the first century. During this period Christ is seen in close touch with his church, and occupying his proper place as “Master of assemblies”, and as the Chief Shepherd of the fold, 1 Pet 5: 4

## 1. The Lord's Attitude, v 1

He reveals himself to each church according to the peculiar condition and need. Here he is “in the midst” — still holding his place of authority as Lord and Master, Matt 18: 20.

The stars in his right hand show that he holds himself responsible for the well-being

of the church, and is ready to meet its needs as to various gifts in ministry—evangelist, pastor, teacher, Eph 4: 8-11.

## 2. Commendation, vs 2, 3

The role in which Christ appears here is that of Judge, before whom every believer shall stand. As such he searches hearts, and estimates their works in the light of the throne. And unlike men, he first commends all that is worthy of praise.

In the church at Ephesus the Lord saw seven things worthy of mention. Works of faith; labor; patient endurance; hatred of evil; proving all things; burden bearing, and courage, vs 2-3.

## 3. Criticism, vs 4, 5

The Lord's criticism is as faithful and kind as his praise. The church in the first century began to decline in zeal and holy love—*they were wrong at the heart!* Having left their first love, they were gradually getting away from a simple-hearted devotion to the one central fact of Christianity which is Christ.

The supreme motive for living and for doing is love. Christ placed it above all

other things. Communion is put far above service with him. Service is acceptable only as it is the result of abiding in him, John 15: 15.

#### 4. Compensation, v 7

The Master constantly holds out rewards as a worthy motive for Christian service—for doing and for giving, Luke 6: 35; 14:14.

Rewards for overcomers is suited to the special difficulties and dangers that exist in any given period. Here the danger was to neglect communion, resulting always in spiritual death. Those who overcome this would be permitted to eat of “The tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” Abundant and undying life shall be the portion of those who would overcome the tendencies in that period toward carnal and worldly living. There was much service but little sitting at his feet. As a result like Ephraim, gray hairs were here and there upon them, yet they knew it not, Hos. 7: 9.

## II

## THE CHURCH AT SMYRNA

2: 8-11

THE MARTYR CHURCH

JOHN TO CONSTANTINE

100-313 A. D.

Smyrna means "myrrh" or bitterness. This was a period of outward persecution and many of the saints were martyred. Christians were executed at the heathen festivals. Hadrian (117-138) built a temple to Venus on Mount Calvary, and a statue of Jupiter on the sepulcher of the Christ.

Under Marcus Aurelius (161-180) persecution took a new turn. Justin Martyr was beheaded, and Polycarp the aged was burned at the stake. Blandina, a slave girl, was placed on red hot iron chair, and then torn by wild beasts. Under Septimus Severus (192-211) the saints suffered in no less cruel fashion. Pontomina and mother were slowly dipped in boiling pitch.

## 1. The Lord's attitude, v 8

The Lord's attitude toward this church is in perfect keeping with the needs and con-

ditions of his people. They were passing thru sore trial and awful testing, even to the point of martyrdom; and to these he is “the first and the last”—the One who had also died a martyr and was alive for evermore. This was their consolation, that because he lived they should live also. Tenderly does he hold out the crown of life to those who were proving faithful unto death, v 10.

### 2. Commendation, v 9

He mentions their works, tribulation and material poverty, but rich in soul! The trials thru which they were passing resulted in great spiritual wealth. Persecution has always been a great blessing to the church. It has been truly said,—“the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church”. The spiritual life feeds on death—the death of the natural and carnal. Selfishness must be put to the sword if one is to know the luxury of unselfish service.

### 3. Criticism, v 9

Judaism in the midst, from which Peter was with great difficulty delivered. The religion of the Jews was long a hindrance to Paul’s gospel and New Testament teach-

ing. It required a heavenly vision to make clear to Peter the true nature of the new age, and of the gospel suited to the divine purpose in this period of grace, Acts 10: 11-16.

#### 4. Compensation, v 11

They that remain stainless and true—being faithful unto death—shall not be hurt of the second death. This is the consolation given to this church, in which many were going to the stake for the truth, Rev. 21: 8. “Tribulation ten days” could easily have a literal fulfillment, but ten speaks of full test under moral responsibility. This is seen in the ten commandments; ten tribes were sent into captivity; ten virgins wait for the bridegroom.

### III

#### THE CHURCH AT PERGAMOS

2: 12-17

THE STATE CHURCH

CONSTANTINE TO GREGORY I

313-590 A. D.

Pergamos means “elevation or actual marriage” and suggests the condition of the church of this period.

## THE ROMAN WORLD

Alexander Severus had a clean court and really favored Christians (222-235). Philip the Arab held also a friendly attitude toward Christians. Constantine (306-337) was the friend of Christians. He built churches and called councils to decide important doctrines. He presided at the great council at Nice, attended by 318 bishops, when the famous Nicean Creed was formulated, in 325.

Julian the Apostate (361-363) may be called the pagan emperor. In an attempt to invalidate the words of the Master, he tried to build the walls of the Temple at Jerusalem but failed after repeated attempts! Deeply conscious of the fact that in his futile efforts to establish paganism he was fighting against the Christ whom his mother knew, when dying on the battlefield he cried: "O Galilean, thou hast conquered!"

Theodosius, who reigned from 379 to 395, accomplished the utter overthrow of Paganism.

Christ's message to the Pergamos church is full of instruction.

### 1. The Lord's attitude, v 12

"He that hath the sharp sword with two edges" Heb. 4: 12. Here Christ is seen as the Judge of his people, ready to smite evil and separate the pure from the vile; the church from the world.

### 2. Commendation, v 13

Beyond any other friend, Christ is able to regard his disciples with an intelligent sympathy, and estimate their service with infinite fairness. Four things are given favorable mention,—

Position—"Satan's throne"

Practice—"Works of faith"

Love—"Holdest fast my name"

Loyalty—"Hast not denied my faith"

### 3. Criticism, vs 14-16

(1) Doctrine of Balaam — causing the saints to stumble; eating unholly things; and fornication.

(2) Doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, v 15. This doctrine has reference to those who conquer the people or laity; while the doctrine of Balaam plainly refers to those who devour or destroy the people. It would seem that this doctrine has reference to the use of the official clergy with undue authority over the

laity; or in other words, Christendom, with its arrogant pride and boasted power.

#### 4. Compensation, v 17

The reward given to the overcomer is always in accord with the peculiar evils then existing in the church. They who overcome the doctrine of Balaam — “eating things sacrificed to idols” — would be fed with angels’ food from heaven. And all who resist the unholy relations of the world would receive a white stone—a token of intimate and holy relation to Christ. The new name engraved thereon suggests a union with Christ which could be known only to the recipient. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him”, and this stone and name speak of a personal and precious intimacy with the Son of God, the Bridegroom of the soul, 1 Cor 6: 17.

## IV

### THE CHURCH AT THYATIRA

2: 18-29

THE PAPAL CHURCH

GREGORY I, TO INNOCENT III

590-1216 A. D.

Thyatira means perfume, bruised, or from *Ωvw* to sacrifice; and here again the meaning

of the word points to the condition of this church period. The papacy developed in this epoch of the church, and gradually gained full sway over the religious world.

### 1. The Lord's attitude, v 18

He reveals himself as the Son of God; eyes a flame of fire; feet like fine brass. The sins of this church call for the searching gaze of a holy God, and the attitude of judgment is shown by the feet of burnished brass.

### 2. Commendation, v 19

The saints at Thyatira have to their credit, not works of the flesh, nor deeds of the law, but "works of faith"; "love and loyalty; service and patient endurance". This is high praise, given because deserved, and yet they were not faultless or perfect before God. Loyalty is the very soul of religion, and they were not lacking in this chief element of a worthy character, but they evidently lacked the courage to speak out and bravely in God's name.

### 3. Criticism, vs 20-25

The word Jezabel gets its meaning here from the character of the woman who bore

the name in the Old Testament. Jezabel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of Tyre, was educated as a zealous Baal worshiper. As wife of Ahab she not only claimed the right to continue her ancestral religion, but tried to impose the same upon the people of Israel. Having persuaded Ahab to erect a temple to Baal, she imported a large retinue of Baal priests which culminated in the test and tragedy of Mount Carmel. Because of the doings of this infamous woman, Jezabel means seduction. As prophetess, she is here in the place of Christ the true prophet. As teacher and leader, she is therefore a usurper, a deceiver, like Mrs. Baker Eddy, Dowie and Russell. Three evils are charged against her,—the spirit of seduction; unholy relations, and unholy nourishment—all of which are peculiar to Rome, for which Jezabel stands.

#### 4. Compensation, vs 26-29

Great and glorious things are promised to the overcomer in this church. They shall have “power over the nations”; “rule them as with a shepherd’s rod”; “the morning star”.

Rome ever seeks power. They who seek it not but remain humble and obedient shall have power over the nations in the day of his power, Ps. 110: 4.

Rome claims the right to rule the earth. They who submit to the powers that be, and recognize the Lordship of Jesus, will rule the nations with him when he comes to David's throne, Ps. 2; Rev 3: 21.

Rome will have great tribulation — the darkest hour of the world shall be theirs (v 22; ch 16); but they who overcome the sins of Rome, who escape the corruption of a worldly and wicked system, shall have the Bright and Morning Star in their hearts as the harbinger of day, v 28; 3: 21; 2 Pet 1: 19.

## V

## THE CHURCH AT SARDIS

3: 1-6

THE CORRUPT CHURCH

INNOCENT III TO LUTHER

1216-1517 A. D.

Sardis means "things remaining or those escaping", and speaks of the peculiar con-

dition of this church. It was a period of laziness, of laxity, in morals and of extreme worldliness.

### 1. The Lord's attitude, v 7

"He that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars". The seven spirits speak of the searching light from God's throne, and the stars speak of gifts for the church. "He ascended on high and received gifts for men" Rev 4: 5; Eph. 4: 10, 11,

### 2. Commendation, v 4

In this church there are "a few names which have not defiled their garments". By a Scriptural testimony on the part of the few, many were awakened to see Rome's corruption, and separated themselves from the abominations of Babylon. But changing the position and name did not change the heart.

During this period the moral standards were shockingly low, sin abounded in the church, and among the clergy. The church was parodied on the stage, and the poets said, "It smelled to heaven"! The church and the world walked hand in hand and, living on the same plane, it had lost its tes-

timony and ceased to be the salt of the earth and as a city set on a hill. Jesus said of the disciples of old, "Ye are the light of the world" but it could not be said of the church of this period.

### 3. Criticism, vs 1-3

The criticism is faithful and searching. They have "a name to live while dead; I have not found thy works perfect before God". A faithful ministry on the part of the faithful saints had changed the name in many cases from Roman to Protestant, but changing the name did not change the nature, v 4.

They were right as to position but not as to condition. Having thrown off outward forms, they failed to take on new life. Turning from the grossness of evil, they had neglected to turn to Christ. Their works were not perfect before God because the steps taken toward reform did not lead far enough from the world. So true is this, the Master threatens to class them with the world and judge them as such, v 3.

### 4. Compensation, vs 4. 5

The promise is given to those who overcome the corruption of this period, that they

shall be “clothed in white raiment” such as the bride shall wear (Rev 19: 8), and have the honor and distinction of walking with him in white “for they are worthy”. The assurance is given to those who are not ashamed of him in his rejection, that their names shall be confessed before the Father, with honorable mention for faithful service and unfaltering devotion to him. He repeats here the promise given in the days of his flesh—“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven” Matt 10: 32.

## VI

## THE CHURCH AT PHILADELPHIA

3: 7-13

CHURCH OF THE REFORMATION

LUTHER TO FRENCH REVOLUTION

1517-1789

Philadelphia means “brotherly love” and fittingly points to a new era of the church, in which there is a return to the old paths, and a becoming reverence for the word of God.

### 1. The Lord's attitude, v 7

His attitude is significant. It is in keeping with the condition and need of this church. "Holy and true; the key of David." He that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth". He is holy, therefore the need of separation from evil. He is true, so that his servants can depend upon him in the battle against organized evil. He has the key of David, teaching that the thrones and kings of earth are under his control, and he can open doors for his servants and for truth that no man can shut. This church covers the period of the Reformation, and Luther's experience affords abundant proof of the "open door" and of the sovereignty of God in the matter of religious progress.

### 2. Commendation, vs 8-11

Of the true believers here he could say, "thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name."

There was strength enough to throw off the yoke of Rome and the traditions of men, and exalt the word of God as the only rule and guide of life. The paramount authority of the Bible was one of the tenets

for which Luther stood and for which he battled. Because the word of his patience is kept, the promise is given that he will keep the true church out of the great tribulation v 10. Mention of the tribulation leads to the mention of the Lord's return, when rewards and crowns will be given, v 11.

### 3. Criticism, v 9

Some of Satan's synagogue in the midst, which can hardly be called a criticism. Since the days of Paul, there have been those who would draw believers away from pure grace, put them under the law, and thus rob God of the glory due to his name. The Galatians were deceived by this clique of Judaizing teachers, and many believers of the 20th century are kept in bondage by the same ungodly bunch who "pervert the gospel of Christ" and the "right ways of the Lord" Acts 13: 10; Gal 1: 7.

### 4. Compensation, vs 12, 13

Unusual distinction and high honor will be given those who love the truth, remain loyal to its Author, and labor to proclaim it in its purity and power. It is written: "Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name" and nothing gives the Author of

truth a keener joy than reverence for his revealed will, 3 Jn 4.

To the overcomers in this church great things are promised, "I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God; I will write upon him the name of my God; the name of the city of my God; and my new name" v 12. Those who overcome the opposition to truth which characterized this period, shall be pillars in God's spiritual temple; and those who will not deny his name in the hour of his rejection, shall bear the name of his God, and his own new name. All of which means that highest honor will be given to the servants of Christ, loyal and true, who "contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" Phil 1: 17; Jude 3.

## VII

### THE CHURCH AT LAODICEA

3: 14-22

#### THE LUKEWARM CHURCH

FRENCH REVOLUTION TO THE COMING OF THE  
LORD

1789 to 19—?

Laodicea means "religious people" and is plainly an ironical comment on this present

church period, when it is quite in fashion to have a religion tho it may be far from being Christian!

### 1. The Lord's attitude, v 7

To this apostate church he reveals himself as the faithful and true witness; the beginning of the creation of God. He remains faithful amid the unfaithfulness of his people, and is the true witness in contrast with the false teachings and disloyal conduct of not a few of his servants.

### 2. Commendation—none!

The Master's silence here is an eloquent and sad comment on the condition of this church in this period. "That which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God". The fact that there is nothing to commend in this modern church should give us pause! "Man looketh upon the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh upon the heart", a sufficient explanation of his silence.

### 3. Criticism, vs 15-17

The most trying thing to the reformer and to the preacher is indifference. The Lord loves whole-hearted, true-hearted service. He would rather see one out and out

for God or out and out for Satan. This church is lukewarm — an emetic, and he threatens to spew it out of his mouth. But this is not apparent to this church. "Thou sayest, I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing". In every feature this defines Christendom in its present state. There is great wealth in the church; splendid equipments; thoro organization; an ornate service; eloquent preaching and fine music, and yet the whole thing a sham and shameful procedure. For the most part it is form without faith; creed without Christ; law but not life! Paul is writing of this present period of apostacy when he says: "Having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof,—from such turn away". One can truly say of the church of the twentieth century: "They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid him"! Jn 20: 13. It is a church of which the Master can speak such amazing words as these: "Thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked".

#### 4. Counsel, v 18

The chief Shepherd offers this worldly and worthless church three things. He

counsels them to buy of him true riches—"gold tried in the fire"; much needed clothing—"white raiment that thou mayest be clothed"; and true wisdom—"eye salve that thou mayest see"! According to the Master's analysis the church of the present hour needs,—

1. True vision—eye salve
2. True virtue—clothing, Isa 61: 10
3. True values—gold tried in the fire

This analysis is most faithful. Where there is no vision the people perish. Vision would lead to virtue, and virtue would mean such an investment of life as would bring to one imperishable wealth.

The letter of Jesus to the Laodicean church is the message of the Master *to Christendom of the twentieth century*. A thing of phenomenal growth, and boasted power, but seen by the holy angels as a miserable, poor and blind thing, without oil and without an objective.

The pastor of a church with about five thousand members remarked in recent years: "I would congratulate myself if I knew one tenth of the members of my

church were really converted"? That is the conviction of every true shepherd who has some spiritual discernment, at least on this side of the Atlantic. Some years ago the state convention of the Baptist work in Pennsylvania voted to erase every member of a church "not doing any thing at it", and as a result fifty per cent were stricken from the church rolls in one year!

We need not take too serious a view of the matter, for "the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his" 2 Tim 2: 19. But it may be interesting to do a bit of figuring on the basis of the distinguished pastor's estimate. If it is true that not more than one-tenth of the church membership are converted, the number of real Christians in the world is not great.

According to official records, there are 47,000,000 adherents to some religious faith in this fair land of ours. These make up what is called Christendom, but since only one-tenth of these may be regarded as truly saved, born again, there are but 4,700,000 Christians in this religious country! Conceding that there may be 10,000,000 Chris-

tians in England and thruout the world, there would be about 15,000,000 saved ones taken when the Lord returns, while the vast majority of church members will be left for judgment scenes. Of 1500 million people in the world, there are probably 15 million saved and sealed unto the day of redemption! And yet there are those who believe that the church is gradually winning the world for Christ, that the leaven will leaven the whole lump! After a fair analysis of Christendom, it is easy to believe that the searching, startling words of Jesus to the Laodicean church are nothing less than the Master's message to the church of the twentieth century.

#### 5. Individual appeal, v 20

The church having rejected the authority of truth, and the leadership of the Holy Spirit, Christ turns to the individual as a means of carrying forward the divine program. "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man will open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with me." One is impressed with the fact that this has been the Master's method in recent years. Frances Ridley

Havergal, and Fanny Crosby; Spurgeon, Moody and Brooks; Gordon, Grant and Jowett,—these opened their heart's door to the Master, and thru them he has blessed the entire world.

#### 6. Compensation, v 21

They who separate themselves from these empty religious forms, corrupt wealth, and boasted power, shall be rewarded with highest honor—they shall share his throne and kingdom, his wealth and glory, when he shall reign over a redeemed earth from David's throne, Rom 8: 17; Ps 110: 4; Rev 20: 1-6.

### DIVISION 3

#### THINGS WHICH SHALL BE AFTER THESE THINGS

Chapters 4 to 22

##### SUBDIVISION 1

###### THE SCENE IN HEAVEN

Chapters 4 and 5

The events of these chapters are a fitting prelude to the tragic events that immediately follow. They are necessary in order to follow intelligently the divine drama that begins in the sixth chapter. In the fourth chapter the throne of heaven is seen—the eternal throne from which the wide universe is ruled; and in the fifth chapter, the kingdom of heaven, or the reign of the heavens.

There are two important features to be studied with care in the fourth chapter,—the throne of heaven, and the One who sits upon it.

##### I. THE THRONE SET V 2

The Scriptures speak of three thrones—the throne of justice in the old dispensation;

the throne of grace in this dispensation; and the throne of righteousness from which Israel's promised Messiah will reign over the earth in the next age. And yet, in the last analysis, there are but two thrones — the throne of the Father, and the throne of the Son. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in *my throne*, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in *his throne*" Rev 3: 21; Heb 12: 2.

1. The throne of this chapter is that from which God revealed himself at Mount Sinai —the throne of his holiness—of inflexible justice and unbending righteousness — the throne from which the wide universe is ruled, v 5; Ev 19: 16.

2. The twenty-four thrones round about the throne, with twenty-four elders seated thereon, indicate more fully its true nature. Twenty-four is twice twelve, and twelve is an important number in Scripture. It is 3 times 4—God's perfect rule among men! Twelve has reference to God in government, in the Old Testament and in the New. Because of the significance of the number, there were twelve tribes of Israel, and twelve men on a jury! The holy city has

twelve foundations; twelve gates; and its dimensions, twelve thousand furlongs, Rev 21: 16-21.

The twenty-four elders point to Old Testament truth—to God's ways with Israel and their relation to his moral rule in the earth. They will be the nucleus of that kingdom for which we pray, which is the constant theme of the prophets. Messiah will make of them kings and princes in the earth, Jer 17: 25.

3. The seven lamps before the throne are said to be "the seven spirits of God". In the fifth chapter they are related to the nature and mission of the Son, v 6. In a vivid description of Messiah's character and kingdom, Isaiah makes sufficiently clear the intended meaning here, Isa 11: 2-5.

4. The sea of glass before the throne speaks eloquently of important truths. The same sea is mentioned in the fifteenth chapter where a certain company of martyrs stand upon it. They sing of Moses and of the Lamb, and their song has reference to God in government, Rev 15: 2, 3. They are plainly the martyrs of the Tribulation mentioned in chapters 6: 9-11; 7: 14-17; 14: 3-5;

20: 4. This sea of glass speaks of perfect cleansing; of perfect revelation; and of full manifestation. It is mingled with fire, teaching that the cleansing has been thru judgment, and that those who stand upon it are proof against judgment scenes.

5. An important feature of this fourth chapter is the "rainbow round about the throne in sight like unto an emerald" v 3. This is a reminder of the covenant promises made to Noah, and which are at last to be fulfilled. God's word can never be broken. His plans can never be thwarted. "He keepeth his promise forever"! They will all be fulfilled — somewhere, somehow, some-when!

The rainbow is a token of "the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth" Gen 9: 17.

The rainbow-circled throne teaches that God is faithful, and will fulfill all promises made in ages past concerning this earth. According to promise, and in keeping with prophecy, Christ's kingdom will be established on earth, and the divine will obeyed here as in heaven. It speaks of the peace that will fill this lower scene after the

storms of centuries have spent their fury; and of the glory that shall fill the earth when he shall reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, before his ancients gloriously, Isa 24: 23.

The rainbow speaks of the uniting of heaven and earth in the next age, when he shall gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are in earth, Eph. 1: 10; Hosea 2: 21. The church will be above the scene, shedding its light and glory over a redeemed earth, Hosea 2: 21, 22. It is then that Nathaniel will "see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man", Jn 1: 51. Jacob's ladder was to him a foretelling of that age when the King on David's throne would be in constant touch with the heavenly city, Isa 4: 5, 6.

6. The four beasts, or living creatures, plainly point to the cherubim of Ezekiel. Cherubim are said to be the defenders of God's character and the executors of his will, Gen 3: 24; Ev 25: 18. The spirit of the living creatures was in the wheel, showing how they accomplish the divine purpose

thru the wheel of destiny or the onward march of time, Ezek 1: 21.

These living creatures, identical with the cherubim, evidently represent the church in her relation to, and partnership with, Christ in his position as Judge of all the earth. The cherubim of the mercy seat were welded out of the same piece of gold. They *represented redeemed humanity* who shall take the place of angels in executing the sovereign will in judging and governing the world, Ps 149: 9; Dan 7: 22; 1 Cor 6: 2.

The four living creatures resemble the lion, calf, man and eagle, v 7. These are symbols of the four gospels. The lion stands for Matthew where Christ is presented as King; the calf, for Mark where he is presented as Jehovah's Perfect Servant; the face of a man, for Luke where he is seen as the Son of Man; and the eagle is an apt symbol of John where he is portrayed as the Son of God.

How do we know that these living creatures represent the church? In the first place, they represent a *redeemed company* (5: 8, 9); and notice further, they hold a different relation to the throne and the Throne Sitter

than the elders who have also been redeemed. The living creatures give honor and glory to the Throne Sitter but the elders fall down and worship him—teaching that the living creatures hold a position of greater dignity and duty than any other redeemed group, vs 9: 10; 5: 4

These symbols, the living creatures, were chosen to set forth *the oneness of the church with Christ*— in his humiliation and exaltation; in his humanity and divinity. This oneness is an important truth of the New Testament. The believer is crucified with him (Gal 2: 20), quickened with him (Eph 2: 5), raised up together and seated with him in the heavenlies (Eph 2: 6). The believer is called to the fellowship of Christ's sufferings now, and finally to be glorified together and reign with him, Rom 8: 17; Phil 3: 10.

## II. THE THRONE SITTER vs 3, 9, 10

The description given of the One who sits on the throne leaves no shadow of doubt as to who it is. It is not the Son but the Father—the Ruler of the moral realm. Jesus speaks of “his Father’s throne” in the third chapter, and this is plainly the Father’s

throne, and the person seen thereon is none other than God the Father. Further proof of this is had in the ascription of the living creatures. In this chapter they adore the Throne Sitter as the Lord God Almighty; but in the fifth chapter, where all authority passes to the Son, these living creatures sing a song of praise “unto him who hath redeemed us to God by thy blood” v 9.

The same is true of the twenty-four elders. In this chapter the praise of the elders is unto him who created all things; in the fifth chapter it is unto him who hath redeemed all things, v 11; 5: 8, 9.

A further and final proof of this truth is found in the first verse of the fifth chapter. Here the sealed book is still in the hands of the Father, but in the seventh verse the Son takes the sealed book “out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne”. The fourth chapter allows a glimpse of the eternal throne, with God the Father as the Ruler of the moral realm.

### THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

#### Chapter 5

The scene is still in heaven. The throne established in justice and judgment is

glimpsed in the fourth chapter; in the fifth chapter government is put upon the shoulder of the Son, and the coronation of earth's rightful King occurs. The kingdoms of this world were offered to the Son of Man and he refused them (Luke 4: 8); they are now offered to him by the Father and he accepts them, Isa. 9: 6, 7.

The chapter covers three topics — the sealed book; the search for a man; and the song of universal praise.

#### I. THE SEALED BOOK v 7

This book written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals, is a book of judgment. It contains the divine program as to the punishment of the wicked and the establishment of righteousness in the earth. It is referred to in Ezekiel 2: 9, 10; also in Isa 29: 11. In Daniel 12: 4 it is sealed; here it is opened and the divine program for Israel and the nations is carried forward until the mystery of God is finished. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" Acts 15: 18.

#### II. THE SEARCH FOR A MAN vs 2-7

Search for one worthy to open the seals of the book is made, and no man in heaven,

in earth, or under the earth, is found worthy to open the book or even look thereon! The search here reveals the fact that man is a failure. Adam failed God in the place of honor and of trust, and every son of Adam's race has proven himself unable to rise to the divine thought as to moral rule in the earth. For four thousand years God looked in vain for a perfectly obedient man; but when his Son entered upon his life-work, the heavens were opened and the glad announcement is heard, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased". The Father opened heaven to express his delight in the perfectly obedient One!

Thru the centuries the school of moral rectitude has been open to all, and the challenge to the sons of men to rise to moral greatness and glory has been given. And now, at the end of six millenniums, God is looking for a man who loves righteousness and hates iniquity,—one in whom every fibre of the soul is devoted to the law of God and to the establishment of his rule among men. But no one is found! John weeps much because man has failed to meet the divine requirements and prove himself worthy of high and holy service among

men. The failure of mankind is so apparent when the test is put, John regards it as infinitely pathetic.

In that crisis hour, when a man is needed for the throne of the world, one who is worthy to execute judgment and establish righteousness in the earth, the only available one is found in the person of the Son of Man—the crucified One! The Lion of the tribe of Judah designates him as warrior and conqueror—the One who has triumphed over every foe. The Root of David points to him as King—King of the Jews; King of all nations; King of kings, v 5. “And the Lord shall be King over all the earth; in that day there shall be one Lord and his name one” Zech 14: 9.

He is found in the midst of the throne—his proper place in every realm! He is the Alpha and the Omega; the first and the last. Around him all things gather and from him all things get their true meaning. “Unto him shall the gathering of the people be”. Human life has value and virtue according to its relation to him. There is no character apart from the Son of God! Heaven is a perfect place because he is there as its cen-

tre and light. The church is "terrible as an army with banners" because he is in the midst as its recognized Lord. The old earth will be changed from chaos to kosmos when he is enthroned as its chosen Leader and King.

He is here seen as "a Lamb as it had been slain" v 6. It is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world—the One who made peace by the blood of his cross (Col 1: 20), — who redeemed all things by his most precious blood—every blade of grass and flower and tree,—the One who satisfied the claims of eternal justice; vindicated divine righteousness; established heaven's throne and satisfied the heart of God. Is it any wonder that he is found worthy to open the book and loose the seven seals thereof! He who was humbled is worthy of highest honor; he who suffered the shame of the cross is worthy of universal praise. Seven horns speak of perfect power, and seven eyes speak of perfect wisdom. In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and his brilliant reign will eclipse all the best efforts of the glorious past, Isa 9: 7; Dan 7: 14; Rom 15: 12.

The Father hands the sealed book to the Son, and from henceforth all responsibility as to the government in the earth is with him, vs 6, 7. In taking the book he assumes authority to judge the nations (Acts 17: 30); smite his enemies (Ps 2: 12); and establish peace in the earth—unbroken peace for 1000 years, Isa 32: 17; Ps 72: 7.

### III. THE SONG OF UNIVERSAL PRAISE vs 8-11

When the throne of the world is given to the Son, universal praise shall be his. Then every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, Phil 2: 10, 11; Ps 72: 9-11.

#### 1. The song of the redeemed, vs 8-10

The four living creatures represent the New Testament saints; the twenty-four elders, the Old Testament saints. The harps and vials full of incense are fittingly linked together, Rev 8: 4. The Lord's prayer — “Thy Kingdom Come”—will have been answered. Prayer is turned to praise, and now for a well-tuned harp! There are four things in this song, “Thou art worthy to take the book and open the seals thereof for,—

1. "Thou wast slain" v 6
2. "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood"
3. "Thou hast made us unto our God a Kingdom of Priests"
4. "We shall reign over the earth", vs 9, 10; Rev 20: 6

### 2. The song of the angels, vs 11, 12

According to Scripture, angels say, but do not sing. What they say here certainly is full of poetic beauty and music. Myriad hosts of angels will join in the coronation of the King, and declare him worthy to receive honor and glory, power and praise, vs 11, 12; Ps 103: 20. From this we learn that the angels have a keen interest in redemption and rejoice with us in the triumphs of the cross.

### 3. The song of creation, v 13

In that radiant hour when the Christ shall be crowned King among men, the redeemed will worship him in song; the angels will follow with an anthem of praise; and then all moral beings will join in the chorus—beings terrestrial and celestial, angelic and demonic — saying: "Blessing and honor.

glory and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever and ever''! Ps 103: 22; Phil 2: 10.

It is then that every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God and the Father, Rom 14: 11; Phil 2: 10, 11. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day, Isa 2: 11.

## SUBDIVISION 2

### THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Chapters 6 to 19

The great tribulation, foretold in the Old Testament and in the New, will fulfill the seventieth week of Israel's allotted time. This is stated in clearest fashion in Daniel, where the divine program for God's chosen people is given in outline, Dan 9: 24-27.

Christ will come for the church as "the bright and morning star" which always appears before the break of day; and the darkest hour this world shall ever know will occur just before the break of day, a cloudless day, when the Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing in his wings, Mai 4: 2.

As with all others, this dispensation of grace will end in judgment—in a series of hardening judgments—which will affect Israel and the false church in particular, and the nations in general. Like Enoch, the

church which is his body, will be caught up before the judgments of God can descend upon a Christ-rejecting world. Like Noah's house, the faithful remnant of Israel will be sealed and pass safely thru the tribulation, Rev 7: 1-8.

This dark period will last seven years, in order to fulfill the seventieth week necessary to consummate Israel's history. It will be characterized by the reign of the false trinity — a blasphemous counterfeit of Christ's universal reign which will immediately follow. This false trinity is called a strong delusion that will be divinely sent to a scoffing world, that they all might believe a lie and be damned, because they received not the love of the truth, 2 Thes 2: 11.

Antichrist, the "man of sin", will reign during this period. He will come into power peaceably and obtain his kingdom by flattery. The Jews will be conciliated, and a covenant to stand for seven years will be entered into; but in the midst of the week of years he will break his covenant with God's chosen people and reveal his true character. With infinite conceit, he will set up an image of himself and, like Nebu-

chadnezzar, demand universal worship, Dan 9: 27; 12: 11; 2 Thes 2: 4.

But Judah has long since been cured of idolatry and will not now bow the knee to graven images. Their refusal will enrage the false Christ and for the space of three and one-half years Antichrist will be God's scourge of Judah who wickedly rejected their Messiah and received another who came in his own name. Judah will be tried and purified as silver, Zech 13: 9; Mal 3: 2-4. Their chastisement will be severe for blood will flow like a river in Palestine, Rev 14: 20. Many will resist unto death, but God will hear the prayers of his people and will speedily deliver, Rev 8: 3.

The seal judgments begin with the first of the "week" and are providential in character—wars, famine, pestilence. The trumpet judgments which follow are more severe, being directed against God's enemies in general. But the repentant cry of his people enters into Jehovah's ear, and the blood of martyrs pleads for vengeance. Heaven's answer is given in the vial judgments filled with the wrath of God, which are poured out upon Antichrist's seat and kingdom, 16: 2-10.

These judgments call forth the utmost enmity against Jehovah and his people. The son of perdition, aided by the demon world (16: 14) will make a final battle for universal empire. The results are recorded in 2 Thes 2: 8, and Rev 19: 19-20.

The great tribulation will affect Israel, the nations, and the false church, called Babylon.

### THE SEAL JUDGMENTS

#### Chapter 6

The first series of hardening judgments, which will be of a providential nature, Matt 24: 6, 7.

##### I. THE FIRST SEAL OPENED VS 1, 2

The Lamb opens it! The One clothed with power to execute judgment opens the seals, and the four living creatures are in fellowship with him. In our study of the fourth chapter, it was clearly evident that these represent the church, 1 Cor. 6: 2.

##### II. THE SECOND SEAL OPENED VS 3, 4

The red horse with his rider, who has power to take peace from the earth—these

speak of war, such as will characterize this period, Ezek 14: 21; Zech 6: 2; Matt 24: 6. 7.

### III. THE THIRD SEAL OPENED VS 5, 6

The black horse speaks of the dark shadows that famine cast—of the pathetic conditions that always follow in the wake of war. War, famine, pestilence — these things are always related and inseparable. A measure of wheat for a denarius (7½ pence)! 2 Kings 7: 1, 2, 18; Zech 6: 2; Matt 24: 7.

### IV. THE FOURTH SEAL OPENED VS 7, 8

The pale horse — “sallow or greenish horse”—with death upon him and Hades following—these easily point to the intended meaning. Thru sword, pestilence and wild beasts, many shall perish, Zech 6: 3. Concerning these first events of Antichrist's reign, Jesus says: “All these are the beginning of sorrows” Matt. 24: 8.

### V. THE FIFTH SEAL OPENED VS 9-11

When the fifth seal is opened “the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they

held" are seen. These martyrs of the tribulation are the first to seal their testimony with their lives under Antichrist's reign. That the tribulation period is dominated by the spirit of the law is seen in the petition of these souls under the altar. Their attitude toward their enemies is one of vindictiveness, and they cry for vengeance upon their murderers.

The cry of these slain ones is in entire harmony with their conscience and their creed and well pleasing to God. The vindictive Psalms are in full accord with the spirit of the righteous. The Psalms treat of that kingdom that will be established on the principles embodied in the law—justice and righteousness—and these martyrs are children of that kingdom, v 10. Their prayer is not denied but they are asked to wait until others shall be killed for the truth, as they were, Rev. 7: 9-14; 11: 9-12; 12: 11, 17; Matt 24: 9-14.

These martyrs of the tribulation are a part of the group who have prominent place in the affairs of state at the beginning of the new age. Of these it is written: "They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" Rev 20: 4.

## VI. THE SIXTH SEAL OPENED VS 12-17

With the opening of this seal there is given a view of the end. It is a picture of the last end of the tribulation period, when Christ shall come according to prophecy. It is a glance at the closing events of that dark period before turning to another theme in chapter seven. The great earthquake; the darkened sun; the moon as blood; the falling stars, — all of these point to the very moment of the coming of the Son of Man, Matt 24: 29, 30; Luke 21: 25-27; Isa 2: 19-21; Hosea 10: 8.

Verses 15 to 17 tell of the consternation—the amazement and fear—that will seize all classes of ungodly men when Christ shall come to judge the nations and punish them for their wickedness. It is the fulfillment of Isa 13: 9-13—“And I will punish the world for their evil and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.” The fulfillment also of other prophecies, such as these—

“Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty” Isa 2: 10-12.

"The thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars; and they shall say to the mountains, Cover us, and to the hills, fall on us" Hosea 10: 8.

"Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, cover us" Luke 23: 30.

This forward glance at the last end of the tribulation occurs at the close of the eleventh, the fourteenth and the sixteenth chapters. Here is the key to the most abstruse feature of this book. To recognize this fact is to solve the most difficult problem the Revelation holds for the Bible student. Failing to see this unique arrangement the Spirit has given, leading interpreters of this book have written page after page in a futile effort to explain the phenomena recorded in these portions of the Vision. We search in vain for a satisfactory explanation of these verses until we recognize the fact that the divine Author of the book has staged the last end of the tribulation at the end of these four chapters, and for good and sufficient reasons.

## THE SEALED AND THE SAVED

## Chapter 7

The seventh chapter comes in between the sixth and seventh seals as a parenthetical word about Israel, and is therefore entirely independent of the regular plan and progress of this book. The chapter introduces two entirely different groups, and yet they are closely related as we shall see a bit later. There is first the sealed remnant; then the white-robed company.

## I. THE SEALED REMNANT vs 1-8

The Scriptures speak of the spared remnant; the martyred remnant, and the sealed remnant. These sealed ones are of God's electing grace. The sealing means that they are set apart for faithful service during this tribulation period, and preserved as a nucleus of the earthly kingdom. The sealing means that they are the property of God; that they are approved of God; and that they have divine protection and therefore safe forevermore.

Holding "the four winds of the earth" means that the natural course of events is

stayed until the chosen of Israel have the mark of God's favor and protecting care.

The angel ascending from the east may be Michael the prince of Israel. He is ever associated with Israel's fortunes. The Scriptures present him as their guide and defender, Gen 22: 11; Eec 3: 2; Dan 12: 1; Rev 10: 1.

Twelve is the number of God's governmental ways. It is the number that speaks of his perfect rule among men, and for this reason twelve thousand of each tribe are sealed. In the eternal city where God governs perfectly this number constantly occurs. There are twelve foundations; the walls are twelve times twelve cubits; twelve gates; and twelve thousand furlongs each way.

Here we have a pre-view of the sealed remnant. In the fourteenth chapter there is given a review of the same company, after they have come thru the tribulation scenes. There are some difficult features in this book, but this is not one of them. Certainly no intelligent person can have any doubt as to the personnel of these sealed ones. They are Israelites, all of them, chosen from the

twelve tribes and set apart for important ministry during the terrible scenes of these closing days of the age.

## II. THE WHITE-ROBED COMPANY vs 9-17

These verses tell of three things concerning this interesting company—their personnel, their praise and their portion.

### 1. Their personnel.

This vast host of redeemed ones seen standing before the throne with palms in their hands, are not the church.

The church shall not enter the tribulation; these pass thru much of it, and are slain in it, v 14.

The church shares his throne; these are seen standing before the throne, v 9.

The church is God's temple in which he will dwell; of them it is said, "he shall spread his tabernacle over them," v 15; Eph 2: 21, 22.

This great multitude of all nations, kindreds and tongues, have reference to those who shall be saved thru the faithful testimony of the sealed remnant who will preach the "gospel of the kingdom" during the

tribulation period, Matt 24: 14. For this reason this company is intimately associated with the 144,000 in the fourteenth chapter, as well as in this.

The Bible is its own best commentary, and the sign or mark of identification may always be found by the devout student of the word. What class of the redeemed is this great multitude? Can we identify them? They are plainly the martyrs of the sixth chapter to whom white robes are given; but this company includes "their fellow servants also and their brethren that should be killed as they were" 6: 11. This numberless host includes *all of the martyred saints of the tribulation*, and the vastness of the multitude indicates to us the extent to which Antichrist will be permitted to prevail against the saints and overcome them, Dan 7: 21; Rev 13: 7.

They may be called *the white-robed company*, for they have come out of the great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, v 14. More will be said about this company when we come to the fourteenth chapter, where the same group appears, and where

their identification is found in these words, "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth," the same truth stated in this chapter, v 18; 14: 4.

### 2. Their praise, vs 10-12.

Raised from the dead and lifted to the throne of heaven, they have palms, the emblem of victory!

They have gained the victory by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, v 10; 12: 11.

They have gained the victory over the beast—the victory of faith, for this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith, 1 John 5: 4.

They have gained the victory over death, and proved it to be the gateway to life indeed, 1 Cor 15: 57.

For these reasons, this redeemed company strike a high note of jubilant praise. They have a well-tuned harp! 14: 2.

### 3. Their position, vs 15-17.

These tribulation saints have a place of high honor. They stand before the throne, v 15; 14: 3.

Their ministry is that of ceaseless praise, 14: 3. But when the battle is over and Christ's glorious kingdom is established in the earth, this redeemed company is given prominent place in the affairs of state. They live and reign with Christ a thousand years, v 15; Rev 20: 4.

Tribulation experiences are forever past for them. They knew hunger, thirst, and suffered under a scorching sun; but now they have full compensation. God will comfort them. He will wipe away all tears, vs 16, 17; 16: 9. The Lamb will compensate them. He will feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of water, v 17; 14: 4.

### JUDGMENTS UPON THE NATIONS

#### Chapters 8 to 11

The seventh chapter comes between the sixth and seventh seal as a parenthetical word about Israel. The eighth chapter takes up the series of hardening judgments where the sixth seal leaves off, in the sixth chapter. Out of the seventh seal come the seven trumpets—a series of judgments more severe than the seals. The seal judgments are providential in character — wars, famine,

pestilence, earthquakes. Jesus said: "All these are the beginning of sorrows" Matt 24: 8.

(Chapter 8)

When the Lamb opens the seventh seal there is silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

What is the meaning of this silence?

"Be still and know that I am God": Ps. 46: 10.

The trumpet judgments are poured upon Israel's foes in answer to the prayers of his elect on the earth, and this is surely the meaning of the half hour's silence in heaven. The prayers of the saints here have reference to the cry of the faithful remnant -- a cry for deliverance from, and vengeance upon, their enemies. Their prayers are given in the Psalms and the prophets, and are strictly Jewish in character. The prayers of the faithful remnant are recorded in the following Scriptures—

Psalm 44: 18-26

Psalm 55: 1-15 Vindictive

Psalm 58: 6-11 Vindictive

Psalm 83: 1-5, 13-18

Isaiah 59: 9-21

Micah 7: 7-20

The silence in heaven means that Jehovah is waiting for the sincere cry of his servants, his covenant people, to reach his ear. The altar, the golden censer, and the incense, speak of Jewish interests—of government in the earth. As of old, these prayers are offered with incense, which always speaks of the infinite perfections and preciousness of the Christ—of his worth and of his finished work.

Deliverance is given in answer to the prayers of the faithful remnant on earth, prayers presented with the merits of the atoning death of their kinsman-Redeemer. These trumpet judgments are seen to be the direct result of the cry of his people, and this fact gives meaning to their purpose and nature. The first four trumpets affect the earth, sea and sky; the last three deal directly with the different classes of Jehovah's foes on earth, vs 1-6.

#### I. THE FIRST TRUMPET v 7

This judgment was foreshadowed in the judgments upon Egypt when Jehovah was dealing with the enemies of his people.

“And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven, and the Lord sent thunder

and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt" Ex 9: 23-26.

The Psalmist had no difficulty with this Scripture. He accepted it as a literal fact for, referring to this judgment, he says: "He gave them hail for rain, and flaming fire in their land" Ps 105: 32. The first trumpet judgment is so similar, it is easier to believe that it is literal than to read into it some strange and fancied meaning. The effect upon the trees and grass would seem to settle the whole matter of its true nature.

"The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth; and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up" v 7.

This judgment must be regarded as literal in every sense, literal hail and literal blood. It is limited as to area and also as to objects of destruction. The "third part" means that only a portion of the earth is affected by this plague, as in Egypt! In the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, there was no hail, Ex 9: 26. The trees and grass in a part of the earth are destroyed by the fire and hail.

Blood-red rains and blood-red snows are not unknown to the world. In the winter of 1926 the papers told of snow in Minnesota the color of blood. On Aug. 7, 1819, Capt. Ross saw the mountains of Baffins Bay covered for miles with blood-red snow, many feet in depth. According to Cicero, word was brought to the Roman Senate on one occasion, that it had rained blood; also that the river Atratus had flowed with a bloody stream. Of this tribulation period it is written: "I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke" Joel 2: 30.

## II. THE SECOND TRUMPET vs 8, 9

Some say this mountain means heresy!

Others say the fiery mountain is Satan!

There are those who regard it as a symbol of the ravages of Atilla.

This fiery mountain is a direct judgment from God, the same as the fire that destroyed the cities of the Plains. That was direct from heaven, and so is this. How then could it have reference to heresy, or Satan, or the tragic doings of Atilla! Of Othello it is said: "Whose ruin was wrought

for want of thought," and might not the same be said of some interpreters of this chapter?

This judgment was foreshadowed in the plagues of Egypt, as the text will plainly show.

"And Moses and Aaron did so, as the Lord commanded; and he lifted up the rod and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood" Ex 7: 20; Ps 105: 29.

The second trumpet judgment and the plague sent upon Egypt are so similar, it is impossible to avoid the conviction that as that was painfully literal so is this future event. One of the "wonders" foretold, it is a direct judgment from heaven upon a portion of the sea, or seas, in order to accomplish a certain purpose among men. The fact that the result is literal—that the water is turned to blood; that creatures in the sea die as the result of the miraculous change of the water; and the ships are destroyed—these specific results leave no room for hu-

man opinions as to the nature of this judgment.

### III. THE THIRD TRUMPET vs 10, 11

This star is regarded by some as a symbol of an apostate teacher — Arius, Pelagious, Mahomet, or Russell. Leading modern expositors see it in Attila the Hun!

Let it be confessed, religious dignitaries are sometimes symbolized by a star, but a careful reading of the verses will forbid such an interpretation. Water is a symbol of people sometimes (Rev 17: 15) but not here. Men drink of the waters and die and how could "waters" stand for men here! It would be equivalent to saying "men drank of men and died"!

To a Futurist, the star could have no reference to a teacher of the past, for he is convinced that the events recorded between chapters 6 and 19 belong to *the future*, to the seven years of tribulation necessary to complete the divine program for this age. To the devout student of the word the star can have no reference to a teacher of the future, for the language forbids it. It is too specific. The results of the judgment, so clearly stated, forbid any such interpreta-

tion. "And many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter." If we concede that the "bitterness" has reference to false doctrine, do men die from imbibing false doctrine? Is it not trifling with words, and with the evident meaning of Scripture language, to regard death here as anything but a painfully literal fact? It is a revelation, and not a parable, and surely it is not fair to conclude that the Holy Spirit could not make clear the evident and intended meaning.

It is a burning star—like a lamp.

It falls from heaven!

It falls upon the third part of the rivers.

Its name is Wormwood.

Wormwood, or absinthe, is a bitter, poisonous herb. It is bitterness itself, — the poisonous bitterness of absinthe. Used freely it produces convulsions, paralysis, and death. Dr. Seiss says: "On the 21st of March, 1823, in one of the Aleutian Islands, there was a great volcanic explosion and, as one of the results, the river assumed the color of beer, and was so extremely bitter as to be unfit for use." The God of the elements, in his own mysterious way, will

fulfill the predictions of these verses in the same literal fashion.

Of Israel it was said: "Behold I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink" Jer 9: 13-15. This judgment must be taken figuratively because *the context and history call for such interpretation*. The prophecy in Revelation must be taken literally because the details require it. Apart from a literal interpretation, the details would have no intelligent meaning. The language here calls for the same interpretation as the words spoken of Israel in the wilderness: And when they came to Marah they could not drink of the waters of Marah for they were bitter; therefore the name of it was called Marah" Ex 15: 23.

#### IV. THE FOURTH TRUMPET v 12

The judgment is a direct fulfillment of the words of the Master, "There shall be wonders in heaven and in earth." The sun, moon and stars are darkened.

According to Grotius, they are the cities of Galilee, and the people of the Jews destroyed by Vespasian! Some able writers such as Elliott, Lord, Cummings and Barnes,

consider it a picture of the subdivision of the western imperial government, and the setting up of the new rule of Heruli under Odoacer. Jesus says: "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars" Luke 21: 25.

The analogy between Israel's deliverance from Egypt and the punishment of their enemies at the end of this age is easily traced. The plagues were sent in answer to their cry.

"And the Lord said I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians" Ex 3: 7, 8.

In Egypt they were oppressed by Pharaoh, here they are oppressed by the Anti-christ. In Egypt they cried to Jehovah for deliverance; here the heavens remain silent while the prayers of the faithful remnant enter into Jehovah's ear. In Egypt the plagues were sent by harnessing the elements and suspension of natural laws; here Israel's enemies are punished in the same way. Then "there was thick darkness in all the

land of Egypt for three days"; here the day shone not for a third part, and the night likewise" Ex 10: 22, 23.

A literal and accurate interpretation of this judgment is given in Isa 13: 9—"For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity" Jer 4: 23, 28; Ezek 32: 7, 8; Joel 2: 10, 30, 31; Amos 5: 20; Zeph 1: 14-16; Matt 24: 29.

#### (Chapter 9)

The last verse of chapter eight belongs to chapter nine. It introduces the woe trumpets and calls attention to the severity of the judgments they will bring upon the world.

#### V. THE FIFTH TRUMPET vs 1, 21

To compare Rev 8: 13 with 12: 9, 12 is to be convinced that the ninth chapter begins the last half of the tribulation week. The three trumpets become woes because Satan is cast down to the earth where he will reign for three and one-half years.

### 1. The star that had fallen, vs 1, 2.

The star is called "him" showing that a person is meant. The keys of Hades are given to him, which simply means that he has permission to open the pit of the abyss and turn loose on men a mighty host of evil spirits. It is a star "fallen from heaven", reminding us of the words of the Master: "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" Luke 10: 18.

Since the last half of the tribulation begins with the fifth trumpet, the star is plainly Satan who is cast down from the heavenlies in the midst of the week. This is made very clear in the twelfth chapter where the purpose of his advent here is disclosed.

"Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down to you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he has but a short time" 12: 12.

Being on earth, he is permitted to open the pit and call to his aid all the powers of hell in a frenzied effort to destroy everything that bears the stamp of God in the earth. Here he opens the pit to release demons. In the twentieth chapter he is cast

into the same pit, where he is kept in chains for one thousand years, Ps 103: 20; Rev 20: 1-3.

The bottomless pit of v 2 should read "pit of the abyss". It has reference to Hades, not Gehenna. Hades is not the place of final punishment, but Gehenna is. The pit of the abyss is the "lower part of the earth" into which Christ descended in the hour of his death, Eph 4: 9; Rom 10: 7. The beast and false prophet are cast into the lake of fire at the beginning of the millennial reign, Rev 19: 20. Satan is kept in the pit of the abyss during the golden age, and then cast into the lake of fire, 20: 10.

Opening the pit marks the beginning of Satan's reign on the earth. He has been cast down out of the heavenlies, and now the hosts of hell come up to meet him in the conquest of the earth, 12: 12.

## 2. Mission of the locusts, vs 3-6.

The locusts are demons from the pit turned loose on men! They have power as the scorpions of the earth, which points to their Satanic origin and nature. Their mission is to torment men, a suitable task for a demon, Matt 4: 24.

Their power is limited, as Satan's power always is. They are limited as to sphere of operation (v 4), and also as to time v 5). It is a direct judgment of God upon those who have not the seal of God in their foreheads, v 4. The One who graciously seals his own servants in chapter seven, here metes out punishment to the unsealed.

The command not to hurt the grass or any green thing calls to mind the locusts of Egypt. That plague was plainly a type of this more tragic event, v 4; Ex 10: 4, 14, 15. In Egypt the locusts ate up "every herb of the land"; but these, being demons, are restricted to the mission of tormenting men.

### 3. Description of the locusts, vs 7-11

Dr. Seiss speaks words of true wisdom when he says: "They are a sort of infernal cherubimic antipodes of the Living ones conjoined with the heavenly throne. The horse, the man, the lion, the scorpion, are all combined in them"; and adds, "they are extraordinary and infernal agents whom Satan is permitted to let loose upon the guilty world, as a part of the judgment of this great day."

Every simile used here in describing this infernal host points to the nature of their mission on earth. They are an organized host from hell—an infuriated mob bent on the destruction of human life. A militant host ready for battle. Their breastplates indicate the fact that they are invulnerable — entirely beyond the retaliation of men, v 9.

These demons assume the form of scorpions, and thus accomplish their deadly work among men. The pain from the sting of a scorpion, tho not generally fatal, is perhaps the intensest that any animal can inflict upon the human body. Of a boy stung in the foot by a scorpion Labordi relates that “altho of a race which bears everything with remarkable patience, he rolled on the ground, grinding his teeth, and foaming at the mouth.”

They have a king over them, which shows that they are an organized band from the pit, bent on destruction in the earth. “His name shall be called Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins”; but this angel of the pit is called Apollyon which means *destroyer!* He may be identical with the

beast from the pit mentioned in chapters 11: 7 and 13: 11.

The period of torment is significant. Five is the number of moral obligation and here speaks of discipline under moral rule. This sign of moral responsibility is written in man's physical and mental life. He has five senses, five fingers, and five toes, all of which speaks eloquently of his divine origin and relation.

#### VI. THE SIXTH TRUMPET 9: 13 to 11: 13

The voice from the four horns of the golden altar have reference to the prayers of his people in chapter 8: 3, where it is clearly evident that the trumpet judgments are sent in answer to the cry of the faithful remnant, which ascends as sweet incense before God. This reference to the golden altar teaches that these judgments under the sixth trumpet are also sent in answer to the prayers of the faithful remnant of Israel. It is the day of vengeance for their enemies.

##### 1. The need of this judgment, vs 20, 21

The condition of society at the time of this event calls for just such a visitation as

this. Mankind are hopelessly depraved and their attitude is that of defiance. "Just and true are thy ways thou king of nations."

We have an inspired record of their doings. "And the rest of the men, who were not killed by these plagues, repented not of the work of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and the idols of gold, and silver and copper, and stone and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor talk; and they repented not of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornications, nor of their thefts" vs 20, 21.

(1) Demon worship will be prevalent at that time; and who are these demons?

According to Josephus, the orthodox Jewish opinion is that "demons are none other than the spirits of the wicked dead." Justin Martyn, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, Augustine, and the vast majority of early Christian writers, regarded demons as the souls or spirits of the unsanctified dead. In his "Great Confederacy of Evil," Dr. Seiss has given the subject an exhaustive study, and his conclusions are worthy of note. He says concerning the demons frequently mentioned in the New Testament,—"The bur-

den of evidence and authority is to the effect that demons are the souls of dead men, particularly the spirits of those who bore a bad character in this world" Deut 18: 10; 32: 17; Lev 17: 7; Ps 106: 37; 1 Cor 10: 20, 21.

The revival of spiritism in this country, and in England, will easily prepare the way, and make possible the kind of worship predicted here. Thru the propaganda carried on by Conan Doyle and Sir Oliver Lodge, there are now 5,000,000 spiritualists in England.

(2) Idolatry will be a universal practice—a return to the lowest forms of heathen worship and pagan thought. In the latter times "some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons" — a prediction fulfilled before our eyes. Large groups are turning *from* the true religion and turning *to* fables —to the ancient beliefs restated in theosophy, Christian Science, and New Thought. And these beliefs are preparing the way for a return to the material forms of idolatry named in this Scripture. Socrates had his demon guide, and he believed in idolatry.

Those who accept the Socratic philosophy will naturally end with the worship of idols.

### (3) Heathen practices

“Neither repented they of their murders.” Human life has been regarded as the cheapest thing in the world during the recent world war, and it will be valued even less during the closing days of the age. Where “evolution” is taught the sacredness of life soon passes, and suicide becomes a common thing. It is the natural result of *the greatest hoax of the last hundred years*. There were twenty thousand homicides in this country last year, and the number is rapidly increasing.

“Nor of their sorceries.” It is believed that the word includes tampering with one’s own health by means of drugs, potions, intoxicants, and often with magical arts and invocations of spiritual agencies.

## 2. The nature of this army, vs 17-19

These horses are the embodiment of hellish natures and powers. It is they who destroy men. Out of their mouths issue fire, smoke, and sulphur—the very elements of hell. The tails of these horses are also an agent of destruction. They are like ser-

pents with a deadly bite. These horses have riders, *but no separate action is ascribed to them.* It is the horses, not the riders, that do all the mischief.

The four angels are evil spirits who have charge of these forces from hell. Euphrates speaks of locality — “the place where the world had its beginnings; where man sinned; where he was banished from Paradise; where Satan first alighted on this planet; won his first triumph, and first set his foul agencies against man in operation.”

Jesus said: “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, he walketh thru dry places (desert) and seeketh rest”. The region of the Euphrates, above all, abounds with the sort of territory which the Jews regarded as the abode of evil spirits.

### 3. The number of this army, v 16

And the number of the horsemen were 200 thousand thousand, or 200 million! In the recent world war there were in arms 59,414,700 men a little more than one-fourth of the army that will be mobilized for the conflict of the last days of this age.

4. The number of months they will be permitted to carry on their destructive work, v 15

The locusts of the first plague were permitted to torture men five months; this army is allowed to continue for an hour, a day, a month and a year, or 13 months. Even Seiss regards this literal estimate of time here as correct. The woe trumpet begins with the middle of the week. If we add the duration of the first woe to the 13 months of the second woe, we have 18 months, which leaves just two years more of tribulation times, Dan 12: 11, 12. By this we mean that all the events that follow the second woe will be crowded into two years.

5. The number slain by these plagues, v 15

This plague slays one-third of all men living on the earth. There are now about 1500 million people in the world. As we have seen in a previous chapter, catching away of the church will not materially affect these figures. Estimating a man to every five inhabitants, there will be about 300 million men on the earth when these judgments fall. One-third of these would mean that 100 million men will be slain by

this second woe — four times the number slain in the recent world war.

These are hardening judgments and lead not to repentance. They that escape or survive them turn not from demon worship, nor from their wicked ways, vs 20, 21.

When viewing a panorama of the battle of Gettysburg, on exhibition some years ago in Philadelphia, a trifling feature fixed itself upon the mind. Part of the rim of a well was shown with real stone and earth, and part of it was painted on the canvas. It was so skillfully done, the difference between the pointed stone and painted canvas was not apparent. And it is not otherwise with this plague under the sixth trumpet. It is impossible to see where to draw the line between the human and the satanic; the familiar and the mysterious; the natural and the miraculous.

But with hell turned loose on men, nothing else could be expected. Men will be demon possessed and demon controlled. Then it will not only be frenzied finance, but frightful depravity, murderous hate, fearful intrigue, fierce and bloody strife.

The whole world will be under devilish, hypnotic power for one brief hour.

We may gain further light on this chapter by tracing the analogy between it and the second chapter of Joel. There a vivid picture of Christ's army is given; here it is Antichrist's army in action. The points of resemblance are striking and full of interest. The first eleven verses of Joel have reference to the coming of the Lord to Zion in defense of his people, as pictured in Zech 14: 1-9. "And the Lord shall utter his voice before *his army, for his camp is very great*. For he is strong that executeth his word; for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it" v 11. Since Antichrist will imitate Christ in every important way, we have here a flood of light on the second woe trumpet. Here are some of the points of resemblance in both—

1. Horses are used, v 17; Joel 2: 11
2. Armies are great, v 16; Joel 2: 11
3. The soldiers are invulnerable, v 17; Joel 2: 8
4. Terrible destruction and death, v 18; Joel 2: 3

5. The element of mystery is prominent, v 17; Joel 2: 10
6. The miraculous element is also prominent v 17; Joel 2: 10
7. They have great captains, v 11; Joel 2: 11.

(Chapter 10)

THE SIXTH TRUMPET—continued

There are three things to be noted in the tenth chapter--the mighty angel, the oath of the angel, and the little book.

**I. THE MIGHTY ANGEL vs 1-4; Dan 12: 7**

This angel is generally regarded as the Son of God, but there are different reasons why such a view seems to us unlikely and unscriptural.

Notice that he is called “another mighty angel” which classes him with created beings. Let it be confessed, the description given of this angel is very similar to that given of the Son of God in the first chapter of this book; but we must not regard this angel as identical with the divine Son, and for this reason, that he is never called an

angel in Scripture. The chief purpose of Paul's letter to the Colossians was to prove to them that Christ is more than an angel. The writer of Hebrews detaches the Son of God from the highest of angelic creatures, and puts an infinite distance between them. The *peerless supremacy of the Son* is his theme in the first chapter, and here are some of the contrasts drawn between the Son and angels,—

The Son is an heir; angels are servants  
The Son was born; angels were created  
The Son is a king; angels are subjects  
The Son is a God; angels are worshipers  
The Son is exalted to the throne; angels are ministering spirits.

Of the three men who appeared to Abraham, two are called angels and the other is called the Lord, Gen 18: 13, 33; 19: 1. When the Son of God appeared to Daniel he appeared as a man. "Then I lifted up mine eyes and looked, and beheld a certain man clothed in fine gold of Uphaz, his body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning; his arms and feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice

of his words like the voice of a multitude'—  
Dan 10: 6.

This angel is mighty but not almighty; he is like the Son of God but still only a creature. He is clothed with great authority and yet only a messenger. He may be regarded as the angel of his presence, but not his personal presence, Isa 63: 9. A final word about the matter is this. The Son has received from the Father all power, and the government is upon his shoulder, Isa 9: 6. He is on the throne and directs the entire program of the tribulation week. Would it not be unlikely, unseemly, and improper for the King of all kingdoms to be running errands that angels were created to perform? The eternal fitness of things would seem to forbid the belief that the angel of this chapter is the divine Son.

The rainbow speaks of covenant promises concerning the earth which must now be fulfilled. God is not slack concerning his promises as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, Gen 9: 14, 15; 2 Peter 3: 9; Rev. 4: 3.

## n. THE OATH OF THE ANGEL vs 5-7

With one foot on the earth and one foot on the sea, the angel takes possession of the world for God. "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, and he will take possession of his own—of all that was redeemed by Christ's most precious blood. He swears by the creator of all things (the divine Son!) that there shall be no longer delay" Ezek 12: 19-25; Matt 24: 48; 2 Peter 3: 3, 4, 8, 9. When the seventh angel shall begin to sound the mystery of God will be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets vs 6, 7; Amos 3: 7.

The "mystery of God" has reference to his purpose of grace for the race,—to his plan of full redemption for the world. This plan is stated in chapter 11, verse 15 — "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." Eden was the original pattern and plan as to the government of the world, and now at last the purpose of God is to be achieved according to prophecy. It is called the restitution of all things, which means that all, things lost thru the fall shall be re-

stored to more than Edenic beauty and fruitfulness, Acts 3: 21. What the first Adam failed to do, the last Adam will achieve in a glorious way! "He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law" Isa 42: 4.

The nature of this restoration of all things was disclosed to the prophets—

1. A Deliverer was promised, Gen. 3: 15; Isa 9: 6
2. Removal of the curse also, Isa 11: 1-9
3. Healing of the nations, Isa 35: 1-10
4. Restoration of Israel, Isa 35: 10; Jer 31: 10
5. Salvation of the Gentiles, Isa 9: 7; 32: 17
7. Purity of life and literature, Zech 13: 1
9. Prosperity thruout the earth, Isa 35: 1-5; Amos 9: 13, 14

The angel is sent to announce officially that the time for the fulfillment of all these covenant promises concerning the earth has come—that the golden age is to be ushered in without further delay.

## III. THE LITTLE BOOK vs 2-4, 8-11

Some regard this little book as identical with the book the Son of God was found worthy to open in the fifth chapter; but there are different reasons why it could not be the same. In the first place, that book is not called "a little book". It is a book of government including all the judgments of the tribulation period, and all that will be necessary to "subdue all things" and put all enemies under his feet, 1 Cor. 15:25, 28. This little book has to do with something entirely apart from the ordinary affairs of the earth. It is probably the record of those things the thunders utter, and which John is not permitted to write. They are things not related to the regular program for this period. The fact is stated that they are related to the future. John is directed to eat the book, which means that the contents were all made clear to him; and of these things he must prophesy before many peoples and nations, tongues and kings.

It is a book of judgment and a feature separate from the ordinary course of events. Its utterances could not refer to tribulation scenes for John was not per-

mitted to write them! If John is one of the two witnesses, the contents of the book would include his testimony on earth during the desolation of the temple, Dan 9: 27. It may have reference to a message John will have for the world at the beginning of the kingdom of peace, Ezek 3: 1-4; Ps 119: 103.

Not the angel, but "a voice from heaven" gives instruction to John as to the seven thunders, and whose voice is this? It is the Lamb who opens the seals of the book of judgment, and who directs these hardening judgments. It must be the voice of the Son of God.

### (Chapter 11)

#### THE SIXTH TRUMPET—continued

The eleventh chapter is a continuation of the tenth, and the events belong to the sixth trumpet, second woe, up to the 14th verse. Three things in these verses call for attention,— the temple, the two witnesses, and the two beasts.

##### I. THE TEMPLE vs 1, 2

Where is this temple and who are the people who worship in it? It is in Jerusa-

lem, the city of David and of David's throne. The time has come to restore the worship of the temple for the people of the temple, and measuring it means that God will now take possession of it, and restore things to their original and intended purpose. What is measured is from that moment his, and he will protect it and hold it as sacred. Israel's faith and national hopes are all centered in that temple of sacred history and its restoration is assured. "And the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple; but who may abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth?" Thruout the next age it will be the center of gathering and place of worship for all tribes and nations. "Mine house shall be called the house of prayer for all people" Isa 56: 7; Hosea 3: 4, 5; Mal 3: 1, 2; Acts 15: 14-17.

## II. THE TWO WITNESSES vs 3-13

Who are these witnesses about whom so much has been said and written? There is no positive proof as to their identity, but there is some light.

The venerable Bede, and many others, have taken them to be the Old and New Tes-

taments! But such a guess is far from the truth.

It is appointed unto man once to die. Enoch and Elijah have not died; therefore they are believed to be the two witnesses, for they will be slain for their testimony. The return of Elijah is promised, Isa 40: 3; Mal 3: 1; 4: 5; Matt 3: 3. He was with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration and conferred with him as to his decease at Jerusalem, Matt 17: 11.

Tertullian said: "Enoch was translated and so was Elijah; nor did they experience death. They are reserved for the suffering of death that by their blood they may extinguish Antichrist."

Ephraim the Syrian, speaking of the Antichrist and the day of judgment, says: "But before these things, the merciful Lord will send Elijah the Tishbite, and with him, Enoch, to teach religion to the human race; and they shall preach boldly to all men the knowledge of God, exhorting them not to believe in the tyrant thru fear. They shall cry out and say: this is a deceiver, O ye men, let none of you in any way believe him, for in a little while he will be utterly

abolished. Behold the Lord, the Holy One, cometh from heaven.”

This argument is strengthened by the fact that the two witnesses will be prophets of judgment. Their testimony greatly annoy — “torment them that dwell on the earth” v 10. Enoch was a prophet of judgment and so was Elijah, 1 Kings 18: 40; Jude 14, 15.

The two witnesses are called—

The two olive trees Zech 4: 3

The two lamp stands Rev 11: 4

The anointed ones Zech 4 :14.

Enoch was a “lamp” in his day, and the same may be affirmed of Elijah. He could say, “I only am left and they seek my life” 1 Kings 19: 10; Rev 11: 3.

It is believed by many that Moses and Elijah will be the two witnesses in these closing days of apostasy, and for the reason that the miracles they perform are similar to those performed by these two prophets of old. They will have power to destroy their enemies with fire—as Elijah did; and power of waters to turn them to blood—as Moses did in Egypt! vs 6, 7. This belief is strengthened by the fact that Moses and

Elijah were with the Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration. That event gives them special place and privilege as prophets of Jehovah.

There are others who believe that Daniel and John will be chosen for this important ministry. To Daniel it was said: "Go thou thy way till the end; for thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days" Dan 12: 13. And to John it was said: "Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings" 10: 11.

Enoch and Elijah; Moses and Elijah; Daniel and John. Which of them will fulfill this unique ministry on the earth during the last half of the tribulation week? Who can tell?

### III. THE TWO BEASTS v 7

One of the most difficult tasks of this book is to differentiate the two beasts mentioned in verses 2 and 11 of chapter 13. The false trinity—dragon, beast and false prophet—is before us in these chapters. The false prophet is sometimes called the beast, as in chapter 13: 11.

The first beast, the Antichrist, comes from among the people, a man among men (13:

11), but the second beast, the false prophet, comes from the under world (13: 11); and it is he who apes the work of the two witnesses. He imitates their miracles so successfully as to convince the people that he is the true prophet of God, and thus wins their allegiance, Rev 13: 13, 14. He not only causes these prophets to be slain, but all who will not worship the image of the beast.

“And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed” 13: 15.

But it is the beast, not the false prophet, who makes war against these two witnesses and slays them. Only of the beast is it said: “he ascendeth out of the pit of the abyss,” Rev 17: 8, 11; 2 Thes 2: 3. The difference between the two “beasts” will be shown best by contrast,—

1. The beast is full of pride; the false prophet is unassuming.
2. The beast is clothed with power; the false prophet is an assistant.

3. The beast is the "man of sin"; the false prophet resembles a lamb!

4. The beast is the "son of perdition"; the false prophet is a servant of Satan!

5. The beast seeks worship; the false prophet seeks no honors.

6. The beast is a world leader; the false prophet strengthens his leadership, Rev 13: 11-17.

#### IV. VIEW OF THE END VS 14-19

The seventh trumpet sounds, and before the third woe is poured out, a view of the end is given. The end is at hand, and heaven rejoices over the triumphs of the cross. Great voices are heard, saying: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." The elders rejoice and praise God for the day of his power, and for the kingdom for which they have prayed so long, vs 16, 17.

The things mentioned here belong to the hour of his advent, and are strictly kingdom truths. The elders announce the features related to his advent because they are specially interested in his earthly reign.

These features should be seen in the order mentioned and studied with great care.

1. First, the Lord comes to David's throne, according to prophecy, v 17; Joel 3. 9-12; Rev 6: 16.

2. The nations are angry, and why? They resent the presence of Christ and his interference with government affairs! So deep is their resentment, they will actually take counsel together, saying: "Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us; but he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision" Ps 2: 1-5.

3. "And thy wrath is come." The great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand? Now it is "the blood of the Lamb" with its deep and precious meaning; then it will be "the wrath of the Lamb", from whose face the wicked will desire to be hid! v 18; Ps 2: 12; Ps 110: 5; Prov 11: 4; Rom 2: 5; 1 Thess 1: 10.

In the "view of the end" found in the sixth chapter (vs 12-17), this truth is stressed in a most searching and solemn way. It is the end of the age, and the appointed Judge has come to David's throne.

The day of grace is past, and now everything must be tested by the standards of righteousness and truth. The kings of the earth and the great men; the wise men and chief captains; the mighty men and every bondman, hide themselves in the dens and rocks of the mountains, and say to the rocks and mountains,—“Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne and from the *wrath of the Lamb*, for the great day of his wrath is come and who shall be able to stand.”

That will be a great prayer meeting, but with strange petitions! They will not pray to Christ, but to the rocks and mountains. They will not desire to see his face, but to be hid from it! Their desire is not for his presence, for that would be unbearable! Their one thought will be to remain at a distance from him, and sheltered from his frown!

#### 4. Judgment of the dead v 18.

Who are the dead referred to here? This can have no reference to Old Testament saints, for they are raised up with the church at his secret appearing, before the

tribulation begins! 1 Cor 15: 23; 1 Thess 4: 16.

Among the dead raised here for judgment will be the children of Israel who perished in the wilderness under the discipline of Jehovah, but who were promised a place in the kingdom of peace so long foretold. Every son of Isaac is an heir of the kingdom, and they will be raised from the dead in due time according to prophesy. It is written: "I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel; and I will place you in your land." This is in entire accord with Dan 12: 2—"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt" Ezek 37: 12-14; Dan 12: 1-3. It is written of Israel: "My people shall not be reckoned with the nations," and we are not surprised to find a resurrection of the dead who are directly related to the kingdom.

There will doubtless be a class of believers who do not attain to martyrdom, but who perish thru wars, famine, pestilence and from wild beasts, during this tragic

period; and many will die from fright. These will all be resurrected at his glorious advent, and will become a part of the regenerated kingdom. At his *secret coming* the sons of God, the heirs of glory, will be resurrected, 1 Cor 15: 23. At his *coming in power*, when every eye shall see him, the "children of the kingdom," the heirs of the earth, will be resurrected. The first event is not mentioned in prophecy, but the second is frequently mentioned, Job 19: 23; Isa 26: 19; Ezek 37: 12; Dan 12: 1-3.

### 5. The Day of Rewards v 18

The church is not included here for she has been clothed with immortality at the beginning of the tribulation, 1 Cor 15: 53. She has stood before the judgment seat of Christ for rewards (2 Cor 5: 10), and comes here with the King to share in the judgment of the world, 1 Cor 6: 2; Rev 19: 14.

The rewards here have reference to those related to the kingdom—to prophets who foretold the kingdom; to tribulation saints who suffered for the kingdom; and to those who fear his name—who repent at the call of the angelic herald and are permitted to

enter upon the blessings of his glorious reign, Rev 14: 6-7.

#### 6. Destruction of the wicked, v 18.

He will "destroy them which destroy the earth" when he comes in "all his glory" to judge the nations and punish the wicked for their iniquity, Matt 25: 31-46. Thruout prophecy there is constant reference to the fact that the wicked must be destroyed out of the earth as a preparation for the kingdom of righteousness and peace. This truth is stated over and over in the Scriptures, and is given as a source of comfort to the saints. "And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity. I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible," Isa 13: 11. The coming King will "deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper" Ps 72: 12. He will destroy the oppressor out of the earth, that the man of earth may no more oppress, Ps 10: 18. The wicked shall be ashes under the feet of the children of the kingdom in that day, Matt 25: 34; Mal 4: 3; 2 Thes 1: 9.

## ISRAEL IN THE GREAT TRIBULATION

## Chapters 12 to 14

Like the seventh chapter, these three chapters are parenthetical. They do not mark any advance in these judgment times, but tell of Israel's relation to them in the different stages of their progress.

The second series of hardening judgments is broken to allow a sketch of God's covenant people as they will appear under the reign of Antichrist. Their punishment will not be direct judgments from God, and yet they cannot wholly escape the sufferings that will come from these. They will suffer according to the nature of their sins. For rejecting their Messiah in wicked unbelief, God will cause them to pass thru the fires of Satan's reign of terror. The Lord referred to this when he said: "I am come in my Father's name and ye receive me not; if another come in his own name, him ye will receive."

These three chapters tell, for the most part, of Israel's relation to the last half of the tribulation week, when Satan is on earth.

SATAN'S ATTITUDE TOWARD ISRAEL IN THE  
GREAT TRIBULATION

Chapter 12

Satan's attitude is disclosed in the words: "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the rest of her seed," v 17. There are four things in this chapter—the first wonder in heaven; the second wonder in heaven; Satan cast out of heaven; and Satan's presence in the earth.

I. A GREAT WONDER IN HEAVEN VS 1, 2.

Opinions differ as to what the woman represents, but the meaning lies on the surface. The woman here is plainly Israel of whom Christ was born, Isa 7: 14; 9: 6; Heb 2: 16. She is "clothed with the sun" referring to the glory of Israel, her past and future greatness, Zech 12: 7; Isa 60: 1-3, Luke 1: 33. The moon under her feet would show that the church was then unknown to Israel. The moon is an apt symbol of the church in Scripture, Cant 6: 10; 1 Cor 15. 41. The crown of twelve stars has reference to the twelve tribes and would seem to be a final proof that Israel is meant in this symbolism.

The second verse—"And she being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered"—has reference to the birth of Jesus, as the prophets had long foretold, Isa 7: 14; 9: 6; Luke 2: 11. The view held by some that the child is the church is far-fetched and introduces all kinds of confusion.

## II. ANOTHER WONDER IN HEAVEN vs 3-6.

The twelfth and thirteenth chapters occupy us with the false trinity—the dragon, beast and false prophet. The dragon is Satan, vs 3, 4, 9; Rev 20: 2. Red should read "fiery red," v 3.

The seven heads refer to his complete rule as "god of this world" 17: 7-11. Horn stands for power exercised by a ruler, Dan 7: 8; 8: 3-6. The ten horns point to the ten kingdoms under his rule for one brief hour, Rev 17: 16, 17. The seven crowns would indicate that he is at that moment ruling in the earth, Rev 13: 2; 17: 3.

"And the dragon stood before the woman to devour her child as soon as it was born," v 4. It is impossible to read these words without thinking of Herod's attitude toward

the child whom the wise men sought, and of his frantic effort to murder the new-born King, Matt 2: 16.

The child of verse 5 is plainly Jesus who was born of the seed of Abraham, Luke 1: 31-33; Heb 2: 16. It is he who will rule all nations with a rod of iron—a truth affirmed thruout the Scriptures, Ps 2: 8, 9; Rev 19: 15.

The child caught up to God's throne has reference to Christ's ascension, Acts 1: 10, 11; Heb 12: 2; Rev 3: 21.

While it is true that the church will rule the nations with Christ, this man-child cannot refer to the church, for the church is never symbolized by a child, much less a male child! Peter refers to Christ as "thy holy child Jesus," Acts 4: 27.

The Holy Spirit's favorite method is to teach by analogy, and for this reason there is a striking fitness in the choice of types and symbols, of figures and metaphors. A woman is the chosen symbol of Israel as the mother of the Messiah, and also of the false church (Rev 17 and 18), but never of the true church, and for good reasons. The marriage of the Lamb has not yet occurred,

and therefore the appropriate symbol for the church is a virgin. Paul says: "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ," 2 Cor 11: 2.

Those who endeavor to make the "male child" speak of the church, fail to see the eternal fitness of things. Nothing could be so incongruous, or further from the Spirit's intended meaning. Thruout Scripture the church stands for conjugal love. It is the love story of the ages—the mystery hid in God from the beginning of the world, and there is absolutely nothing in a child to suggest such a truth!

Between the fifth and sixth verses is hid the history of the church, which is always ignored in the record of Israel's career. These 19 centuries of grace are passed over in this chapter as if they had not been, and for the reason that the church is not related to the subject, nor to the truth these signs are intended to set forth. This is not the only instance where this method is used in Scripture. In Dan 9: 26, where the events mentioned concerning Jehovah's people and city cover the entire church age, there is

no reference to the church, to the mystery of the one body. Jesus himself puts 19 centuries between the first and second clauses of the second verse of Isa 61, as Luke 4: 19 plainly shows.

The first five verses of this chapter occupy us with the birth and ascension of the Messiah. The sixth verse leaps over the present age of grace and begins with Israel in the last half of the tribulation week, as outlined in Dan 9: 24.

In point of time, the woman flees into the wilderness at the beginning of the three and one-half years of Antichrist's reign of terror (v 14); but it is mentioned in verse 6 in order to perfect the picture and complete the statement concerning the woman's relation to the dragon.

The 1260 days of verse 6 cover the same period mentioned in verse 14, and also in chapter 13: 5, where Antichrist's reign of destruction and death is limited to 42 months. Jesus refers to that tragic hour when he says: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, then let them which be in Judea flee to the

mountains....for then shall be great tribulation" Dan 9: 27; 12: 11; Isa 26: 20; Matt 24: 15-22; Mark 13: 14-20.

### III. SATAN CAST OUT OF HEAVEN vs 7-12.

The Greek word used here for heaven has for its meaning the visible heavens, the atmosphere; the sky and starry heavens. It is translated sky in Matt 6: 26; 8: 20; Mark 4: 32; Acts 10: 12.

The scene here occurs in the heavens where the Prince of the power of the air holds sway, and not in the third or seventh heaven where God's throne is established, Eph 2: 2; 6: 12. Out of the highest heaven Satan was cast in the beginning, and now at the close of this dispensation he will be cast out of the lower heavens, so that unhindered intercourse with the earth may be had, John 1: 51.

Michael is Israel's prince and protector, and he never stands for Christ as some suppose, v 7; Dan 10: 13, 21; 12: 1; Jude 9.

In the midst of the week Satan is cast out of heaven, at the end of the week of years he is cast down to hell—into the pit of the

abyss, to remain for one thousand years, Isa 24: 22; Rev 20: 3.

The names of Satan reveal his true nature, v 9. Dragon, the embodiment of the evil principle, has been superstitiously dreaded and even worshiped, as in China, where it is the imperial emblem. In the Scriptures dragon is an indefinite word used to interpret the Hebrew word tannin. It may be either a land or sea animal, and is variously translated whale, sea monster, crocodile, serpent. Devil is diabolus in Greek and means false accuser. Satan means adversary, Gen 3: 1, 4; 1 Peter 5: 8; Rev 20: 2.

Satan is dethroned from the heavens in order to give Christ his true place and authority there, v 10; Rev 11: 15: True to his nature he is now the accuser of the brethren before God — a business he has been in for a long time, Job 1: 6-11; 2: 1-5; Zech 3: 1; Eph 6: 12. Keeping under the blood, and the mouth constantly open in testimony to his saving power, is the secret of victory, v 11.

The heavens are congratulated on Satan's exit, and the earth is condoled on his advent, here, v 12. The "short time" has ref-

erence to three and one-half years he will be permitted to reign on the earth. Then he must be put in chains, Rev 20: 3. The 12 months of his unhindered rule among men will seem like ages to those who are so unfortunate as to live under his regime.

#### IV. SATAN ON EARTH VS 13-17.

"When the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the male child" v 13. In the midst of the week of years Antichrist will break his covenant made with the Jews, and he will think to destroy them from the face of the earth. But he who hates Israel hates God, and he who strikes at Israel strikes at God! The heavens will defend his people in that hour, and the earth also. Spiritual and natural agencies will aid them in their defense and protect them from their enraged foe, vs 14-16.

Jesus himself warned them of the hour when they would need to flee to the wilderness in order to escape the wrath of their adversary in the day of his high-handed rebellion against all that is called God, or that is worshiped, v 14; Matt 24: 16-20. The

"water as a flood" refers to the afflictions thru which they shall pass in that darkest hour of human history, v 15; Isa 59: 19; Ps 66: 12.

The earth has been given to Israel as an everlasting possession (Rom 4: 13), and everything in it works providentially and often miraculously in favor of its rightful heirs, v 16. Like the wings of Jehovah, a mist hid the Covenanters from their foes in the hills of Scotland, and it will not be otherwise with his people in this hour of deadly hate and desperate conflict.

In Wilna, on the border of Russia, stands a granite shaft. On the western side of it are written these words: "Napoleon Bonaparte passed this point in 1812 with 410,000 men," while on the eastern side is this inscription: "Napoleon Bonaparte passed this point with 9000 men!" He had said that he not only "proposed but disposed" but God crushed and completely conquered the man of iron nerve and steel will with the tiny snow flake! To this day the Russians commemorate the deliverance given them from the "man of destiny". When God commands it, the very elements become militant

hosts that easily destroy the enemies of Jehovah's people.

The "remnant of her seed" has reference to the faithful remnant who shall remain true to Jehovah thru all these awful days, and preserve a testimony in the midst of abounding wickedness. They have the testimony of Jesus which is the spirit of prophecy. The spirit of prophecy will come upon these chosen ones, and they shall bear testimony to the truth concerning the coming and crowning of the King, v 17; Rev 19: 13. Thruout these dark and dreadful days God will preserve a testimony in the earth to the fact that the promised Messiah is about to come to David's throne, and the rejected One shall be King over all the earth, Zech 14: 9.

The twelfth chapter of Revelation is plainly an exposition of Genesis 3: 15. "I will put enmity between thee, and the woman, and between thy seed and her Seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." In Genesis the two seeds are mentioned; here they are seen in striking contrast. In Genesis the Messiah is promised; here he is actually given. In

Genesis the enmity between them is foretold; here it is fully expressed. The name of the dragon—"that old serpent"—and his attitude toward the woman, point directly to the original prediction concerning the two seeds; and all that is said of the woman is simply a further elucidation of the promise and persecution foretold in Genesis 3: 15. Every sign and symbol, every person and prediction, in this twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse bear upon the truths of that text, and are used to make clear to us its real significance.

### REIGN OF THE FALSE TRINITY

#### Chapter 13

In the twelfth chapter Satan's rule in the earth and his relentless hate of Israel, are announced. In the thirteenth chapter his kingdom is described in detail, — the way his reign will affect the world, and all true believers. The world receives the Anti-christ and worships him. The saints are persecuted and slain by him; and all who refuse full allegiance to him are killed, vs 3, 7, 15.

## I

## THE DRAGON vs 2, 4

Satan's method from the beginning has been that of imitation. He has been content to counterfeit all the divine institutions of the ages.

1. When Jehovah was represented by prophets, he was represented by false prophets, and Elijah's triumph on Carmel's heights was an exposure of the enemy's daring imitation, 1 Kings 18: 21.
2. When God was manifest in the flesh, demons took possession of human bodies and Judas was practically an incarnation of Satan! Luke 8: 27; John 13: 27.
3. In this dispensation of the Spirit, Satan is represented by seducing spirits, and thus he continues to copy the highest and holiest things in his effort to deceive the world, 1 Tim 4: 1; John 16: 8.
4. In this church age, when the believer has access to a throne of grace, where he may have unhindered communion with God, Satan has devised a system of communication with the demon world called spiritism, by which many have been seduced. There

is of necessity some truth in their claims, but it remains a weird and wicked imitation of an exalted spiritual truth.

5. In these last days when God is revealing to his people a larger and deeper spiritual life thru surrender and obedience, Satan keeps pace with what might be called his masterpiece—Christian Science — the most subtle blending of truth and error, including spiritism and metaphysics, Buddhism and theosophy, blended with modern advanced thought! The following quotation will prove that Spinoza, the Spanish Jew, was the author of Christian Science, and not Mrs. Eddy. “God is absolute, and can lack nothing; hence apparent *evil is merely negative deprivation of good*,—a deprivation itself due only to our inadequate view, i. e. only to error! *Evil is then nothing positive*, and the wise man, seeing all things in God, loves God with a love that is identical with God’s love of his own perfections. For God, if not conscious in our fleeting way, has still the fulfillment of all that consciousness means, in the very perfection of his thinking attribute; so that our thoughts are God’s very thoughts precisely in so far as our thoughts are rational, complete, adequate,

true. In other words, so far as we are wise, we directly enter into the perfection of God himself!"

Of all the good in Christian Science, there is nothing original or new; and as to the error in it, there was never anything offered to an intelligent public so provokingly stupid, ignorant and impossible! The secret of its success is a subtle Satanic power over the minds of men.

The climax will be reached when a trinity of evil will successfully imitate the divine trinity at the end of this age, thru which a Christ-rejecting world will be deceived. The last half of the tribulation week will be characterized by the reign of this false trinity, called dragon, beast and false prophet. These three characters will represent the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but of course in an antithetical way. In them may be seen the god of this world imitating the God of heaven.

Cast down from the heavens, the dragon assumes authority over the earth, and imitates God the Father by giving to the beast, --

1. Unlimited power—such as has been given to the Christ, and which he will display in the day of his power, v 2; Ps 110:-3; Matt 28: 18. What he will offer to the beast was offered to the Son of God, but was promptly refused! Luke 4: 5-7.

2. His throne also, and in a way to imitate the Father, v 2; Luke 1: 32.

3. And great authority, v 2; John 5: 27. "And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast." Demon worship is even now a fact,—in Paris and other parts of the world. Because so many are denying the existence of a personal devil, it might be well to add a brief word concerning his origin, nature and destiny.

#### I. SATAN'S ORIGIN

In the description of the king of Babylon (Isa 14), and of the Prince of Tyrus (Ezek 28), the origin of Satan is but thinly veiled. In these inspired pictures there is sufficient light on a subject that must remain in large measure a mystery to mortals until the dawn of a cloudless day.

1. Satan was in Eden, the garden of God, Ezek 28: 13.

2. He was the anointed cherub, Ezek 28: 14.

3. He was the Sun of the morning, Isa 14: 12.

4. His beauty and wisdom were the cause of his fall.

He was created a son of light, and *answered the purpose of his being in the beginning!* “Thou wast perfect in all thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till *iniquity was found in thee,*” Ezek 28: 15.

The secret of his fall is plainly stated. “Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness.” Filled with pride, an unholly ambition took possession of him. He would ascend above the heights of the clouds; he would be like God! Isa 14: 14. He became self-conscious then selfish and conceited; then Satan!

## II. HIS NATURE

His names disclose his nature. Jesus said: “He was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie,

he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar and the father of it," John 8: 44.

1. Dragon, the embodiment of the evil principle.

2. Devil is *diabolus* in Greek, and means false accuser, Rev 12: 10.

3. Satan means adversary, 1 Peter 5: 8; Rev 20: 2.

4. Serpent, his ancient name, speaks of his true nature as crafty, cunning, subtle, deceitful, treacherous, Rev 20: 2.

### III. HIS DESTINY

He abode not in the truth. Having left the place of obedient and joyful service, he can never return! As Milton puts it "he would rather rule in hell than serve in heaven." The downward steps in his career are easily traced.

1. Satan fell from his exalted position in dateless, timeless periods, Isa 14: 12; Jn 8: 44.

2. He will be cast out of the heavenlies, where he is now head of principalities and powers, at the close of this age, *in the midst of the tribulation week*, Rev 12: 12.

3. He will be cast into the pit of the abyss at the close of the tribulation week, in order to make a Millennium possible. There can be no peace on earth while he is at liberty! To put Satan in chains for one thousand years will mean an age of unbroken peace, in which wars shall cease unto the ends of the earth, Rev 20: 1-3.

4. At the close of the thousand years of peace, he will be loosed for a little season, and then cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, to be tormented day and night forever and ever, Rev 20: 7-10.

In this brief outline, the history of this mystic and mighty personage passes before us, and his real character is seen in clearest light — his former position; his fall and frenzied career; and his future state.

## II.

### THE BEAST vs 1-10

The beast of Revelation 13 comes up out of the sea—out from among the people, for water is a symbol of peoples, multitudes and nations, Rev 17: 15.

In the first place, the beast represents Gentile *government* from its beginning to its

final form. The leopard speaks of Gre-  
cian supremacy secured thru Alexander's  
brilliant conquests; the bear of Medo-Persian  
dominance; and the lion, of Assyrian  
rule, v 2.

The seven heads and the ten horns have  
the same meaning here as in chapter 12: 3.  
There they speak of Satan's power organ-  
ized on earth. The seven heads are said to  
indicate the rulers of the fourth universal  
empire, which is Rome. At the close of the  
first century it was said to John: "Five are  
fallen, one is, and the other is not yet  
come."

The ten horns indicate the full expression  
of Gentile rule, and also the form it will  
take under Antichrist's supremacy. There  
will be ten kingdoms with ten kings en-  
throned. The ten crowns speak of ten reign-  
ing sovereigns, v 1; Rev 17: 12, 13. The  
name of blasphemy seen upon the seven  
heads points to the claims of Rome. That  
Rome claims to be the recipient of political  
as well as spiritual authority, is an open sec-  
ret. The claim that the pope is Christ's vice  
gerent on earth, is an insult to high heaven.

The larger meaning of the beast is plainly indicated in the first two verses of this chapter. It has reference to government in the hands of men, and the different forms it has taken thru the centuries,—the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian and Roman empires.

The beast also represents a *person*. It is the name of its head—of its Generalissimo—a great leader whom the world adores and worships—the Antichrist of the last days. Peter, Paul and John, speak of a super-man who will lead the forces of evil on to fullest expression and utter overthrow in the closing days of this age, 2 Thes 2: 3; 2 Peter 2: 1; 1 John 4: 3.

That the beast stands for the sovereign as well as the system, is quite clear from the use of the word in these verses. That the empire is seen in its head—that they are regarded as identical, is a habit of thought gotten from Scripture. Shakespeare makes his characters address the king of France as France, while Cleopatra is called Egypt. As a person he will imitate the Christ, the promised Messiah, in every important way,—

In ruling with authority.

In having deadly wounds.

In being universally worshipped.

In causing all to receive his mark, Col. 3: 17.

Let us look at these features more in detail.

1. The beast will rule with absolute sovereignty over a world empire, and pose as the true Messiah, vs 2, 7. Unlimited power will be given him for 42 months.

Power over all kindreds, tongues and nations.

Power over the saints, to persecute them, prevail against them, v 7; Dan 7: 21.

2. He will have deadly wounds, now healed, even as the Man of Calvary, and many will be deceived, vs 3, 4; Rev 5: 6; Zech 13: 6. Claiming to be the Messiah "who was wounded for our transgressions", the visible signs of a deadly sword thrust will deceive if possible the very elect, v 14.

3. He will be universally worshiped, v 8; Ps 72: 11. "All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life." "And they worshiped the beast, saying, who is like unto the beast; who is able to make war with him?" Having rejected the prom-

ised Messiah, the true Deliverer of the race, the whole world is deceived and ensnared by this crafty foe who leads them on to swift destruction. As Saul was given to Israel to gratify their vanity, so this man is given to the world in answer to their cry for a leader after their own hearts. But it will result, as with Saul, in their utter undoing, 2 Thes 2: 11, 12.

4. He will cause all, both small and great, to receive his mark as a pledge of full allegiance to him, vs 16, 17; Col 3: 17. With this stamp of ownership and loyalty the beast will imitate the divine method of sealing the saints. All believers are sealed unto the day of redemption (Eph 4: 30), and the faithful remnant of Israel will be sealed and kept safe through the searching tests of tribulation scenes, Rev 7: 1-8.

As with the saints, so with Antichrist's followers, the sealing will indicate ownership, and will have for its purpose the securing of full allegiance. The followers of Christ are exhorted to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus; the followers of the beast will do all in the name of the deceiver of men, v 17. They will give proof of loyalty to one who is in open and high-handed re-

bellion against God; one who ignores all divine laws, and who will lead the blinded multitudes of men onto the rocks of swift and awful destruction, Rev 19: 21.

This man of sin will demand worship on the ground of his position. His pretensions will be amazing. He will open his mouth in blasphemy against God, and against them that dwell in heaven. He will "Oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God," 2 Thes 2: 4.

The Scriptures have much to say about his origin, nature and destiny.

#### I. HIS ORIGIN.

1. The Antichrist will come from among the people—he will be a man among men, a super-man, who will come into power as the head of the revived Roman empire, Dan 9: 26. At the close of the first century it was said to John: "Five are fallen, one is, and the other is not yet come." The coming one is the beast who is also called prince and king, Dan 9: 26; 11: 36. He is the eighth, but of the seven kings who shall

reign from the Roman throne, Rev 17: 11. Coming into power when ten kings are on the throne of the world, he will subdue three kings, making himself the eighth! Dan 7: 24.

2. There are different reasons why he will probably be a Jew. Jacob's prophecy in Gen 49: 17 favors very strongly such a view, and his conduct would seem to be final on that point. Of him it is written: "Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women." These are expressions that may not fittingly be said of anyone but a Jew, Dan 11: 37.

3. Since the Antichrist will imitate the Christ in his person and reign, it is fair to conclude that he will be born of a woman even as Jesus was, without a human father! 2 Thes 2: 3. He will ascend out of the pit of the abyss, which means that he will be an incarnate demon, thru a human mother. The beast "that was, and is not, and yet is" refers plainly to the incarnation of some personage who has lived and died, and who will return to this earth to play an important part in the closing scenes of this age. He might be a Caesar, a Nero, or a Judas. Canon Farrar does not hesitate to say Nero

will be the Antichrist, and supports his argument in an able way. The only thing that would disqualify Nero for the role of the beast is the fact that he was a great coward when facing death, but he may have overcome that weakness by this time!

## II. HIS NATURE.

As with most of the names in the Bible, the names of Antichrist indicate his nature. In the seven names given him, we may see the chief elements in his lawless character.

1. Antichrist indicates his religious character, for he will assume all the prerogatives of the promised Messiah. Unlike the lowly Nazarene, this imposter will announce himself as a great personage, like Mrs. Eddy, Dowie, and Simon the sorcerer, 1 John 2: 18.

2. He is called the *man of sin*, because he will embody every element of evil. Man is said to be ungodly, sinner, enemy, and rebel, and the man of sin will be the embodiment of them all. He will be the highest expression of the natural man in his pride, ambition, and love of praise. As such, he opposeth and exalteth himself

above all that is called God or that is worshiped.

3. He is also called the *son of perdition*, and from this we may infer that he will be an incarnate demon. The Son of God is from above, the son of perdition is from beneath. The Son of God represents heaven; the son of perdition represents hell and all its rebel hosts.

4. He is called that *wicked one*, a title that puts him in striking contrast with the *holy One!* 2 Thes 2: 8. Wicked means “evil in principle and practice.” It really means that lawless one, for “sin is lawlessness” 1 John 3: 4. “The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be”, which means that every fibre of the soul in the natural man is against God, is contrary to his will, and cannot please him, Rom 8: 7.

5. The name most commonly given him is *the beast*. This indicates his political character. In this role he makes confederate the nations of the earth, and marshalls all their forces for vast and bloody conquests. It is the beast the world worships, and, as in the plains of Dura, they will bow to his

golden image, Rev 13: 15. Having been cured forever of idolatry, the Jews will refuse to bow to the image, and this refusal will bring upon them terrible persecution, Matt 24: 15-22.

6. As *idol and foolish shepherd*, he will be Jehovah's scourge to Israel—"one who will not heal that which is broken, but will eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces." Having rejected the true shepherd, one will be given them who will destroy and not build up! who will scatter them and leave them to famish in desolate places," Zech 11: 16, 17.

7. Finally he is called the *king*, which is his royal title. As such he will do according to his will and prosper until the indignation be accomplished, Dan 11: 36. A king for one brief hour, and then cast out forever. A prince, but a vile person; a deceiver and flatterer, Dan 11: 21. Crowned, but exalted to heaven in pride, a condition that makes descent into hell the more painful, Rev 19: 21. Woolsey said to his secretary, "Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition! By that sin fell the angels, and how can man the image of his Maker hope to win by it!"

## III. HIS DESTINY.

The fate of this man of fierce countenance and frightful deeds, is plainly stated in Scripture. "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the pit of the abyss and go into perdition" Rev 17: 8. The ten kings under his leadership, will make war with the Lamb, but the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him are called and chosen and faithful, Rev 17: 14.

## III

## THE FALSE PROPHET vs 11-18

The false prophet will direct the religious forces in the closing days of this age. He will be entirely one with the beast in purpose and aim — so much so that he is called "another beast" v 11.

The beast will come from among the people; the false prophet will come direct from hell. The beast will be a priest-king and therefore the official head of the church and object of worship in the earth; the false prophet will not speak of himself, nor

seek a following, but will give full allegiance to the beast. In every way he will strengthen his chief in all his blasphemous claims. He will be the faithful ally of the crowned head of the church and state, with full discretionary powers. Sustaining the same relation to the beast that the Holy Spirit sustains to the Christ, "he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed" v 12.

The reign of the false trinity will be an imitation of Christ's earthly reign which will immediately follow. As Christ will be "a priest upon his throne", the Antichrist will be the official head of church as well as state. The false prophet will sustain the same relation to the Antichrist that the Holy Spirit sustains to the Christ now, and when his kingdom is established among men.

The second beast has "two horns like a lamb," but he spake as a dragon, which means that he will pose as a saint, but preach with the power and wisdom of a demon. His method will be to deceive by imitation, even to the calling of fire down

from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, v 13. By imitating the miracles of the two witnesses, he will wholly deceive them that dwell on the earth, v 14.

The place and relation the “other beast” sustains to Antichrist’s regime is seen in clearest light. *He is assistant to the first beast.* Claiming no place or position for himself, his only thought is to strengthen the position of the recognized head of the political and ecclesiastical world, and in all that he does he is a perfect type of the Holy Spirit, whom he will simulate with wonderful effectiveness.

1. The Holy Spirit represents Christ in character and power (Matt 16: 13); the false prophet will represent Antichrist in character and power, Rev 13: 11, 12.

2. Christ was quickened (made alive) by the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 3: 8); the dead image of the beast will be given life by the false prophet—an apt imitation of the resurrection of Christ! Rev 13: 15.

3. The Holy Spirit seals all true believers (Eph 4: 30); the false prophet will cause all of Antichrist’s followers to be sealed, Rev 3: 16.

Those who receive the mark of the beast are doomed to everlasting torment (Rev 14: 11); and those who refuse the mark of the beast are slain in cruel fashion. They are the martyrs of the tribulation, and form what is called the white-robed company, Rev 15: 1-3.

For one brief hour this trinity of evil will have absolute sway over the earth, and their reign will be one of terror, of tragedy and of triumph over good, Rev 13: 7. The dragon will come down from the heavenlies; the beast will come from among the people; and the false prophet will come up from the pit of the abyss, with all the power of hell back of him, Rev 3: 1, 11. These are finally cast into the lake of fire,—the beast and false prophet at the beginning of the Millennial reign; the dragon after the last revolt, which occurs at the close of the thousand years of peace, Rev 19: 20; 20: 10.

#### CLOSING SCENES OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION

##### Chapter 14

In the seventh chapter a pre-view of the sealed remnant is given; in the fourteenth chapter we have a review of the same com-

pany after they have emerged from the tragic scenes of that dark hour. There are other important features that have brief mention in this chapter, seven of them, and these call for some attention.

#### I. THE SAVED OF ISRAEL VS 1-3

Mount Zion is Jerusalem in Palestine, and not heaven as many suppose.

The Lamb is the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world, thru whose atoning death the entire world is to be cleansed, restored and become the home of the saints. He is coming back to earth again, to take possession of that which is his by right of purchase. John sees him standing on Mount Zion — the very spot from which he rose on wings of light toward the shining city. He has now returned according to prophecy, for it is written: "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem on the east" Zech 14: 4; Acts 1: 11.

The 144,000 are the sealed of chapter seven. They have come thru the tribulation unhurt. The seal of God makes them proof against all the evil of earth. These are here

as a reception committee to meet the King on his return to earth as Israel's promised Messiah. It should be carefully noted that these are never associated with heavenly scenes, save as they have a certain relation to the company who sing the song before the throne of God, v 3. They are Israelites, all of them, and their service is ever related to earth—to the establishment of heaven's rule among men. The reader who fails to see that the 144,000 are never seen in heaven will reach entirely wrong conclusions as to this sealed company. They are Israelites; they have an earthly inheritance; and they have been sealed for an earthly ministry. It is they who "preach the gospel of the kingdom" and with such amazing results, Matt 24: 14.

## II. THE SAVED OF THE NATIONS VS 2-5

John sees a multitude which no man could number, of all nations, kindreds, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands" Rev 7: 9. Who are these?

They stand before the throne of God, 7: 9, 15

They serve before the throne, 7: 15

They sing before the throne, v 3

They are without fault before the throne,  
v 5

These harpers are not the Old Testament saints, for, as we have seen in the previous chapter, they are represented by the twenty-four elders, v 3.

These harpers are not the New Testament saints, for they are represented by the "living ones" v 3.

These saints with a new song are the white-robed company of the sixth chapter, and also the group that should be killed as they were later on in the conflict with Antichrist. The martyrs of the tribulation are here seen as a complete company, and a numberless host it is! These are "redeemed from among men" after the church has been caught up, and are called the first fruits unto God and the Lamb, v. 4.

This heavenly company sing a new song, and the song is heard—is intelligent to the 144,000 Israelites on earth, which means that *this white-robed company before the throne are the fruit of the labors of the scaled remnant who preach the gospel of the*

*kingdom during the tribulation period.* Thru their testimony this heavenly company have been saved, and the number proves that their ministry will be a fruitful one, Acts 15: 17. The results would be unprecedented if these measured the success of their evangel but, great as is the company before the throne, they represent only in part the fruit of their testimony. Who are the "sheep" of Matt 25: 33? These "sheep" survive the tribulation scenes, they are on earth, not in heaven; they are saved and inherit the earthly kingdom, Matt 25: 34.

Those who stand on the right hand of the King in the hour when he shall judge the living nations, have been saved thru the preaching of the 144,000 sealed ones, and they prove their conversion by their good works. They have ministered to these sealed ones whom Jesus calls "my brethren" when they were hungry, sick and in prison, and thus give abundant proof of their faith in the King Matt 35: 40. This great company of inspired missionaries will preach like Paul and Apollos, and mighty results will be had. Their testimony will result in the conversion of the white-robed company before the throne in heaven and of the "sheep" who

stand on the right hand of the King and hear his welcome to the blessings of the kingdom for which we pray, Matt 25: 31-46.

### III. THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL VS 6, 7

Here "everlasting" surely means final—the last call to repentance before the hour of judgment strikes. It is God's compassionate love going out toward a rebellious world before the door of mercy is shut and the day of grace forever closed. This last word is given by an angel, a significant fact. The Scriptures affirm that the angels desire to look into the things pertaining to the gospel, and now before the offer of grace is withdrawn they are permitted to share in its proclamation, and not without definite results. It is a call to "fear God and to worship him", and the results of their evangel are recorded in Rev. 11: 18. Among those who are rewarded at the close of the age are "them that fear thy name, small and great".

### IV. THE FALL OF BABYLON V 8

Babylon here has reference to the false church which will be utterly destroyed at the last end of the tribulation. This cor-

rupt thing is before us in detail in chapters 17 and 18.

#### V. THE DOOM OF ALL REBELS VS 9-11

The most dreadful punishment mortals shall ever know will be inflicted on those who worship the beast and receive his mark of full allegiance, v 10; Ps 75: 8.

The torment of verse 10 refers to the lake of fire, the second death, Rev 19: 20. Whatever may be the portion of sinners whose attitude is less defiant than these, the portion of these beast worshipers is eternal punishment, if words have any intelligent meaning. "Forever and ever" should read unto the ages of ages, Isa 34: 10.

Here is the patience of the saints. "Those who have suffered wrongfully, and in silence, shall see the wicked punished by a just God, with whom vengeance belongeth, v 12; Rev 13: 10.

#### VI. THE BLESSED DEAD V 13

The dead referred to are worthy of special mention. All who die from that hour will be blessed indeed. Their reward will be commensurate with the fiendish torture

thru which they will come to a martyr's death; but they shall rest from their labors and their works will follow them. The grave of every true believer will be emptied at the beginning of Christ's earthly reign. Only the wicked dead remain in their graves during the 1thousand years, which means that there will be a resurrection of the dead at his coming in power, according to Daniel 12: 1-3. Then all who die in the Lord during these seven years will be raised up for some place in the kingdom. There will be resurrections at different stages of the "reign of terror", but for good reasons all who have a place and position in the earthly kingdom, will not be raised up until the end of the troubrous times. Then the returning King will not only judge the living nations (Matt 25: 31-46), but also the dead who are heirs to the kingdom of peace on earth, v 13; Ps 116: 15; Isa 57: 1, 2.

This truth is plainly taught in such words as these: "And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the *time of the dead, that they should be judged*, and that thou shouldest give reward unto the servants of the prophets, and to the saints, and those that fear thy name, small and great; and

shouldest destroy them that destroy the earth" Rev 11: 18. Everything mentioned in this Scripture belongs to the hour of his return to David's throne, including reward to his servants the prophets. Their reward will be a place in the kingdom which they have been permitted to see in vision hour, and the tribulation "saints" will also be rewarded with a place among the glorified in heaven or the purified on earth, Isa 6: 1-8; Matt 5: 5; Dan 12: 1-3.

#### VII. A VIEW OF THE END vs 14-20

The chapter closes with a picture of the events that belong to the last moment of the tribulation -- the coming of the Lord; punishment of the wicked; and the promised vengeance on Israel's foes, v 20.

##### 1. The Judge, vs 14, 15; Matt 13: 39-42.

Authority to execute judgment upon all classes is given to the Son of Man, and it is he who is represented by the angel coming in a cloud crowned as Lord of the earth, and with a sharp sickle in his hand. But let no one imagine that the Son of Man leaves his seat of sovereign power at any time during these years of searching judgments. From the exalted position given him

in chapter five, he will direct these solemn events in all their details, but he will never leave the throne of his power until he comes to David's throne according to the prophecy, Dan 7: 13; Joel 3: 13; Zech 14: 4. Until that hour he is always represented by an angel—one clothed with the credentials of his high office and with authority to speak in his name, v 14; Rev 10: 1-6.

2. The Judgment, vs 16-19; Matt 13: 41, 42.

“It is the day of judgment for the world, for he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” Acts 17: 31; Joel 3: 9-17.

It is the day of judgment for Israel's foes, Joel 2: 4-11; Zech 14: 1-5. The angel from the “altar” would indicate the fact that Jehovah is remembering Israel according to covenant promise, v 18; Jer 30: 20. It is the day of vengeance when all things which are written shall be fulfilled, Zech 21: 22; Isa 61: 2.

It is the day of judgment for the living nations, when they shall be sifted and the chaff separated from the wheat. We need but turn to prophecy for the full and evident meaning of this reaping time. Joel tells of it,—

“Let the heathen be wakened and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, for there will I judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come, get you down, for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great” Joel 3: 12, 13.

This reaping time is foretold and fully explained in the Master’s comment on the parable of the wheat and tares, Matt 13: 24-30. “As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be at the end of this age. The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth” vs 39-42.

### 3. The Justice, v 20.

Justice and judgment are the establishment of that throne from which the wide

universe is ruled, and yonder in that favored land, made sacred forever by footsteps divine, justice will be meted out to the marshalled hosts of Israel's foes who have come to destroy the holy seed. And what a day of slaughter it will be when blood will flow like a river in Palestine! This event, so full of tragedy and of triumph for the saints, is foretold in Ezekiel 39: 1-29; Joel 3: 11-21; Rev 19: 17-21.

It is called "the great supper of God", in which the fowls of the air will be fed on the flesh of men. A feast for birds, but a fatal day for proud and arrogant man! "A thousand and six hundred furlongs are 200 miles—about the length of Palestine, v 20.

### THE SEVENTH TRUMPET

#### THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES

#### Chapters 15 and 16

The fifteenth chapter takes up the series of hardening judgments where the eleventh chapter leaves off, and carries them forward to climax and conclusion.

These chapters are one complete passage. The fifteenth chapter is an introduction to

the sixteenth. It is but a statement of preliminary features — a suitable staging for the tragic events that will close the great drama of human history.

The Holy Spirit has an underlying purpose in the arrangement of the material in these two chapters. It is not a mere accident that the sea of glass is put over against the solemn judgments that will fall upon Antichrist's followers. As we proceed with the study of the two features, it will be seen that a striking contrast is intended thruout. The comparison enhances the value of true loyalty and high courage, and discloses in awful reality the position and the pain of all traitors and rebels.

There are four topics that call for attention in these chapters,—the sea; the saints who stand upon it; the source of these plagues; and the severity of these plagues.

#### I. THE SEA OF GLASS vs 2-4.

This may be seen in type, 1 Chron 3: 2. It is also a feature related to the throne of heaven, Rev 4: 6.

1. In the first place it means *perfect cleansing*. The sea is mingled with fire, teach-

ing that those who stand here have passed thru the fire of judgment and are forever proof against judgment scenes!

Death and judgment are behind them  
Grace and glory are before,  
All wrath's billows rolled o'er Jesus  
There exhausted all their power.

2. It means *full manifestation*. "When that which is perfect come then that which is in part shall be done away." The process will end in completion; the imperfect life will then be perfected; the age of mystery will end with the hour of full manifestation,—when the King shall be manifested to Israel and to the world (Zech 12: 10; Matt 25: 31); and when the sons of God shall be manifested with him, Rom 8: 19; Col. 3: 4.

Then we will be where we would be,  
Then we shall be what we should be;  
Things are not now nor could be,  
Then shall be our own.

3. It means *perfect revelation*. Here we have the partial view; there the full revelation. Here we have the half truth; there the

whole purpose of God shall be disclosed. Here we see thru a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now we know in part, but then we shall know even as also we are known. In this imperfect state we get glimpses of the divine ideal; then that ideal will stand forth in all its beauty and power, 1 Cor 13: 12.

## II. THE SAINTS ON THIS SEA vs 2-6.

### 1. Their State, v 2.

Those who stand on this sea of glass have gotten the victory over the beast, and they are faultless before the throne of God, in perfect triumph, Rev 14: 5.

Who are these overcomers, and why have they such distinction? These are the white-robed company we have noticed in previous chapters. They are the martyrs of the tribulation, who give Christ full allegiance and refuse the mark of the beast. They gladly pay the price of their loyalty to the true Messiah with their lives, and God is pleased to give them highest honor.

They have a perfect state, v 2.

They have palms of victory, Rev 7: 9.

They have harps of praise, v 2.

## 2. The Song they Sing, v 3; Rev 14: 3.

It is a Jewish song! They sing of Moses and the Lamb, Ex 15: 1-21. The song of the church is a new song, but entirely different from this one. This song of the martyrs is worthy of careful study. There is moral tone and great beauty in it.

Great and marvelous are thy works,  
Lord God Almighty;  
Just and true are thy ways,  
Thou King of nations.

An outline of the song will disclose its full meaning.

## I. THE WORKS OF GOD.

## 1. They are great:

Great in variety  
Great in intelligent design  
Great in beauty

## 2. They are marvelous:

Marvelous in power  
Marvelous in wisdom  
Marvelous in adaptation

## II. THE WAYS OF GOD.

## 1. They are just:

God must be consistent with himself!

Justice is the foundation of his works  
His ways are pleasant because just!

2. They are true:

True to his character!

True to his promises!

True to his highest thought for us.

III. THE SOURCE OF THESE PLAGUES. VS 1, 5-8.

These plagues come from the "tabernacle of testimony", which associates them with Israel and their interests in the earth. To Moses it was said: "See that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed thee in the mount" Heb 8: 5. To Joshua "the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth" was a symbol of God's throne and rule in the earth; and these plagues are related to that ark and therefore speak of the establishment of heaven's authority among men thru judgment.

The seven angels are priest angels, indicating the fact that these plagues are poured out in answer to the prayers of the faithful remnant, Ex 3: 7, 9; Ps 76: 7-9; Isa 63: 15-16.

One of the four living ones gives the golden vials, or bowls, to the angels, v 7. These living ones represent the church

thruout this book, and the ministry they fulfill shows the place of honor the church will have in the next age, 1 Cor 6: 2.

“The temple was filled with the smoke from the glory of God”, v 8; Isa 6: 4. God is glorified in all his works—in creation and in redemption; in the destruction of the wicked as well as in the construction of his kingdom.

#### IV. THE SEVERITY OF THESE PLAGUES 16: 1-16.

These plagues are sent upon Antichrist and his followers; upon his throne and empire.

There is a contrast intended here between the white-robed company who have overcome the beast, and the company who surrender to his authority and receive his mark. This is dramatically set forth in Isa 65: 12-15.

1. The first plague brings a grievous sore upon the men who have the mark of the beast. The saints on the sea of glass have fullness of joy; these have fullness of pain! vs 1-2; Isa 65: 14.

2. The second plague destroys all life in the sea—the source of food! The white-

robed company have food provided by the Lamb, but these traitors have nothing to eat, v 3; Rev 7: 17; Isa 65: 13.

3. The third plague destroys their source of water supply. They have nothing but blood to drink, while the martyred saints are led by the Lamb to living fountains of water, vs 4-7; Rev 7: 17; Isa 65: 13. This method of dealing out retributive justice, hard as it may seem to us, will have the approval and praise of angels and of saints in that day, vs 5-7; Rev 19: 2.

4. The fourth plague destroys the source of life and all its comforts. The sun is made seven times hotter than usual, and men blaspheme God because of the heat; and "they repented not to give him glory." While traitors are suffering thus, the true and tried ones are kept where the sun shall not light on them any more "nor any heat" vs 8, 9; Rev 7: 16.

5. The fifth plague fills Antichrist's kingdom with darkness—the final state of the lost! Matt 22: 13.

They gnaw their tongues for pain

They blaspheme God

They repent not of their deeds, Isa 65: 14.

The white-robed company who have remained loyal to God and truth, have perfect light, for the sea of glass means that; these traitors have the blackness of darkness forever. The martyred saints rejoice; these are filled with shame! God's true and faithful ones are blessed forever; these rebels who give allegiance to the Antichrist shall be slain and their name remain a curse, vs 10: 11; Isa 65: 13-15.

6. The sixth plague affects the Euphrates, vs 12-15. The time has come for the final conflict -- for the battle of Armageddon-- will be fought on the plains of Esdralon, in the valley of Megiddo, where so many fierce conflicts have occurred. This battle is foretold in Ezekiel 39: 1-20; Joel 3: 9-17; Zech 14: 1-9; Rev 19: 11-21. The great supper of God, in which the fowls of the air will feed on the flesh of men, recorded in Ezekiel 39: 17, is the same event recorded in Rev 19: 17, 18. When this is recognized, the difficulties of Ezekiel's vision concerning Gog and Magog vanish.

This last conflict of earth will give a suitable climax to human energy and selfish effort. Here the highest expression of man's pride and love of power will be given.

That hour will reveal in clearest light an unholy ambition, which, as history proves, has ever been man's greatest snare.

The army of the Lord that will thwart, confuse and destroy the armies of the Anti-christ in that immortal hour, is described in Joel 2: 1-11; 3: 11; and Zech 14: 3. It will require seven months to bury the dead, and seven years to bury the implements of war, Ezekiel 39: 9, 12; Ps 46: 9.

#### V. SIGNS OF THE END vs 17-21.

This view of the end—of the events that belong to the hour of his advent—is the last of a series of four found at different stages of the drama. The seventh plague is the last of the vial judgments and completes the three series of hardening judgments that cover the entire period of the tribulation. When the seventh angel pours out his vial into the air, a voice from heaven is heard saying “It is done”.

Among the closing events mentioned here are a great earthquake; the fall of “the great city” and of the cities of the nations; the punishment of the mystic Babylon; and a great hailstorm foretold in Isa 28: 17; and Ezekiel 38: 22. This chapter

calls attention to the fact that the greatest events are in the future, that the worst is yet to come.

1. The greatest time of trouble is yet to come. Speaking of these days, Jesus said: "For there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no nor ever shall be, Matt 24: 21. In Mark's gospel, where the Lord is speaking of the same period, we read; "For in those days shall be afflictions, such as was not from the beginning of creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be" Mark 13: 19.

2. The greatest heat from the sun is future, v 9.

3. The greatest earthquake is future, v 18. When it occurs the Master's words to his disciples will be fulfilled: "There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down" Matt 24: 2.

4. The greatest hail storm is future, v 21.

5. The greatest army is yet to be mobilized. In contrast with the 59 million in all the armies of the recent world war, is the army of 200 million seen in action in the ninth chapter of this book!

6. The greatest battle is yet future—greatest in every sense, in motive, in men, in method and in the mighty results, v 16.

7. The greatest slaughter of men in any conflict is future. The Crimean war cost France, England, Piedmont, Turkey and Russia 785,000 men. To preserve the Union, 800,000 perished from wounds and disease in our civil war. In the Revolution and under Napoleon, the French lost 2 million men. The number slain by bullet and disease during the recent world war of four years is estimated at 7 million. But in a future conflict there will be slain in thirteen months 100 million men! This is far beyond the record of any great conflict of the past.

### THE FALSE CHURCH

#### BABYLON THE GREAT THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS

##### Chapters 17 and 18

Satan's most effectual method for working man's ruin has been a cunning imitation of moral and spiritual things. He has counterfeited all the institutions of divine origin—the prophetic office; the priesthood; the church; the kingdom; and will yet imi-

tate the incarnation for Antichrist will be that!

A careful examination of the new teachings of the present hour reveals the fact that the central thought in them all is the deity of man. This is true of the new theology, New Thought, Christian Science and theosophy, and of all the isms of modern origin. The schools of the land, both secular and religious, are propagating the same theory. The teachings of the schools determine the teaching of the pulpit and press, of the forum and the magazine. This will result in a universal belief in what is called the divine immanence, or *pantheistic philosophy*. The call of the hour is to get together on some common basis, and this philosophy, so generally received, will make possible the federation of all classes in one great brotherhood of man.

Every bit of loyalty to truth in the world may be traced to the presence of the Holy Spirit in the church; but when the true church is caught up according to Scripture, all the religions of the world will be blended into one universal creed. This modern church is already shaping. Established on a basis broad enough to be in accord with

the various opinions of men, it is called Babylon. There is given first a description of this corrupt and corrupting thing; and then a dramatic portrayal of its destruction by the reigning kings, v 16.

## DESCRIPTION OF BABYLON

## Chapter 17

It is not a matter of chance that the false church and the true are found side by side in this book. Before the marriage of the virgin bride to her glorious Lord is related (19: 8, 9) the origin, nature and destiny of the false church is given in these two chapters. The true church is ever regarded as a chaste virgin, but this sham church is fittingly set forth by a corrupt woman. There are four topics in this chapter—the woman, the beast, the battle with the Lamb, and judgment of the great whore.

## 1. The Woman, vs 1-7.

John is shown a woman sitting upon a scarlet colored beast, and upon the forehead is written, “Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and Abominations of the Earth” v 5.

As with Antichrist, her names will reveal in some measure her true nature. There are at least six,—

- The great whore, v 1
- The woman, v 3
- Mystery Babylon, v 5
- That Great City, v 18; 18: 10
- Babylon the Great, 18: 2
- That great city Babylon, 18: 10

These names plainly indicate that the woman so frequently called a city *is much more than a city*. The Holy Spirit's method here is evidently the same as in Isa 14, where under the guise of the king of Babylon a full description of Satan is given. The human king is seized upon to reveal a profound spiritual truth, and it is not otherwise in the teaching here.

The seven mountains on which the woman "sitteth" can hardly refer to Rome, and yet it is impossible to detach the woman from "the eternal city". The Roman empire must be restored in order to fulfil the plain teaching of Scripture. "The people of the prince that shall come" destroyed the sacred city and sanctuary in 70 A. D. under

the leadership of Titus, and the coming prince is none other than the Antichrist who will sit upon the restored throne of the Caesars at the end of this age. The restoration of the empire means the restoration of the imperial city on the banks of the Tiber to much of its former greatness and splendor.

Not a few of those who speak with authority on these themes, believe that "the great city" here refers to Babylon of ancient fame, and not without sufficient evidence. There is every reason to believe that the ancient city in the land of Shinar will be rebuilt and will become the great center of operations for the Antichrist during the closing period of his tragic reign. It might suit well his purpose to change the capital of the world from Rome to Babylon in order to carry out his larger program.

This view is not without support in Scripture. The vision of the "ephah" has reference to the rearing of a sanctuary in Babylon similar to the temple at Jerusalem. "Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah? And he said to me, to build it an house in the land of Shinar; and it shall be established, and set there upon her own base" Zech 5:

10, 11. The woman that "sitteth in the middle of the ephah" is allied with wickedness, and is plainly related to the woman of Revelation.

The objections to the view that Babylon will be rebuilt for tribulation times and uses, are removed when it is noted that the Scriptures that speak of the perpetual desolation of Babylon have reference to the future, and not to her present condition. The context clearly shows that the overthrow of Babylon, as sudden as that of Sodom and Gomorrah, is future—that it will occur when the cities of the nations fall, for it is then that God will give to great Babylon "the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath" Rev 16: 19. That the prophecies concerning Babylon could be fulfilled only in the next age, is clearly evident. Then "it shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures" Isa 13: 19-22.

To fully avenge Israel on her enemies, and in order to form a striking contrast between the sons of Jacob, dwelling peacefully in their allotted land, and those who op-

pressed them, Jehovah will make Babylon, in the next age, "a possession for the bittern, and pools of water, and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts" Isa 14: 23.

That these two chapters occupy us with Rome and Babylon is very evident; but the "woman" is something and a great something more than a material city. To recognize the difference between a religious society and a local city, is to understand the more important truth in these chapters.

The intended meaning of the "woman" is found in the first verse, "Come hither and I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that *sitteth upon many waters.*" Further light is given in verse 15,—"The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples and multitudes, and nations and tongues."

From this we learn that the woman is an institution that reaches to the ends of the earth—an organized church established in every land, with whom all kings have been intimate, and all peoples of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. The beast on which she sits is a

universal empire, and the woman is a universal church. All that is said of this mother of harlots — her situation, her sins, her selfishness—every description of her carries us far beyond any local city, out to the ends of the earth. They point to an institution established on every shore, and under every sun. She is in touch with the whole world, consorts with all nations, trades with all peoples, and corrupts all classes of mankind.

1. Her situation reveals this fact, vs 1, 15

2. Her sins reveal this fact

With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, v 2.

The inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication, v 2; 18: 3.

Having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication, v 4.

The mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, v 5.

I saw the woman drunken with the blood of saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, v 6.

Her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities, v 5.

By her sorceries were all nations deceived, v 23.

Babylon is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of demons, and the hold of every foul spirit, and *a cage of every unclean and hateful bird*, 18: 2.

And in her was found the blood of the prophets, and of the saints, and all that were slain upon the earth, v 24.

Come out from among her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues, v 4.

As the "beast" thruout this book includes the entire history of Gentile government, the "woman" here includes the entire history of organized opposition to true religion. Only in this sense could it be said that "the blood of all that were slain upon earth" was found in her. In every age, in the name of religion, Satan has opposed every effort looking toward the redemption of men, and in murderous hate he has slain millions who have marched under Eman-

uel's banner, and have sworn eternal allegiance to the Christ.

Deeply rooted in the human breast are the instincts for self-preservation; preservation of the species; and propagation of the species; but more dominant and deathless than these is the religious instinct. The history of peoples affords abundant proof of this, for in every age men have gladly faced death in defence of their religious convictions. Satan has made much of this strongest human instinct, for of the 300 religions of the world *there is only one true religion*, Jas 1: 27. The other 299 are counterfeits of the true, created for the purpose of deceiving the multitudes who must worship at some shrine. Thru these empty forms and bloodless creeds the onward march of Jehovah's hosts has been bitterly opposed from the beginning.

This mystery Babylon is plainly Ecclesiasticism in its last form—an empty Christless thing, corrupt and corrupting the earth. In the thirteenth century, what was known as the church was so corrupt, the poets said "it smelled to heaven"; and what will it be when every restraint is lifted, and "men of

the world" will direct its councils and determine its course!

The history of words is often full of instruction. They have a growth the same as people. A *physical* structure was called Babel (Gen 11: 9); the *moral* foe of Israel was called Babylon; and the *spiritual* foe of the church is called mystery Babylon. It is one of the *seven* mysteries of the New Testament revealed to Paul, and one that has large place in the Scriptures. This religious Babel is a counterfeit of the true church, as the following will clearly show:—

1. The church of Christ is called a chaste virgin; the false church is called a woman, v 3; 2 Cor 11: 1-3.
2. The church is called a mystery "hid in God from the foundation of the world"; the false church is called "mystery Babylon" v 5; Eph 3: 3-6.
3. The church is called a city—the holy Jerusalem; this false church is called a great city, Rev 18: 10; 21: 10.
4. The true church will be arrayed in royal garments; the woman is arrayed in purple and scarlet, v 4; Ps 45: 13.

5. The true church has a cup of sacred memories and holy joy; the woman has a cup of vile memories and sinful pleasures, v 4; 1 Cor 11: 25.

6. The church will bear the name of its true nature — of holiness, “for his name shall be in their foreheads”; the great whore bears her true name on her forehead, v 5; Rev 22: 4.

7. Finally, the church which is his body is inspired by the Holy Spirit; this false church is drunk with the blood of martyrs, v 6; Eph 5: 18.

We return from a careful survey of this truth with a deepened conviction that the “great whore that sitteth upon many waters” is the church of the last days, — an empty, unholly thing, an organized society of one creed thruout the world, carrying forward many activities in the name of religion, but at heart a wicked crafty league existing for the sole purpose of self-aggrandizement, for gaining temporal position, earthly possessions and carnal pleasures.

Papal Rome may easily be the nucleus of this corrupt system, but the church of the

tribulation period will be something very different from Rome as she is now known.

Master minds will conceive of a church founded on a creed so liberal and lawless as to be utterly abhorrent to Rome of the present; but then religion will have passed beyond the Pope's control! The creed of this world-church will be written in a way to include all isms, cults and creeds, and with an appeal that will win the allegiance of the multitudes. They will agree on a few catching phrases, and a new church will be born in a day. Repudiating Christ, Christian truth, and the Holy Spirit, all that is predicted of this church of the last days is easily possible. It will corrupt the whole earth, Rev 18: 3.

#### THE TRUE CHURCH AND THE FALSE

1. The Church of Christ is separated from the world; the woman commits fornication with the world, v 2.
2. The church's treasure is in heaven (Col 2: 1); the woman's treasure is in the earth.
3. The church will be exalted to heaven (Heb 12: 23); the false church will be cast down to hell, Rev 18: 18.

4. The church will be clothed in royal garments (Ps 45: 13); the woman shall be made naked, v 16.

5. The church will be tried by fire (1 Cor 3: 13); the false church will pass thru the fire, Rev 18: 8.

6. The church will be judged as to works (2 Cor 5: 10); the false church will be judged according to her works! Rev 18: 6.

7. The church will become the Lamb's wife (Rev 19: 8); the woman shall be hated and destroyed, v 16.

## II. THE BEAST VS 8-13

Thruout this book the term "beast" is used to designate Gentile government from the beginning, as revealed in Nebuchadnezzar's image, and to Daniel by four beasts, Dan 2: 31-35; 7: 1-7. But in this chapter the word has evidently a more limited meaning.

The "scarlet colored beast" on which the woman sitteth, has reference to the last form of Gentile rule, when Rome revived according to prophecy, shall again have world dominion. The beast is full of names of blasphemy, which means that the claims

of Rome under Antichrist's regime will be shockingly wicked. "He shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods; neither shall he regard the God of his fathers nor regard any god, for he shall magnify himself above all" Dan 11: 36.

The "beast" is also used to designate the Antichrist, the sovereign head of the league of nations during the closing years of Gentile rule. This is plainly seen in Rev 13: 5-8. In the third verse of the chapter we are studying, the beast has reference to Gentile government, but in the eighth verse the same word has reference to a *person*, the last crowned head of earthly government in the hands of men.

That the "scarlet colored beast" has reference to the revived Roman empire, is plainly indicated by the angel. Of the seven kings who would complete Rome's career, five had fallen in John's day; one was on the throne, and the other had not yet come. When he is come "he must continue but a short space" because Antichrist the eighth and of the seven, i. e., of the same class, will

usurp his place and suddenly come to unlimited power.

In a brief word, the origin, nature and destiny of this super-man is given. "The beast that was, and is not, and yet is". These words concerning this false Christ remind us of the words of the Master. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty" Rev 1: 8. One can not fail to see to what amazing limits Satan will carry his work of imitation under the reign of the false trinity.

This brief word has reference to a personage who lived in some past epoch of human history—"that was"; who died and is now in the pit of the abyss—"and is not"; and who will appear again at the close of this age to organize a world empire; but after a brief and bloody reign shall go into perdition, vs 8, 11, It is all a matter of conjecture as to who this "man of sin" is. Some think it will be Judas, called the "son of perdition"; others, Nero; and still others, Julian the apostate. That he will ascend from the pit, is clearly stated; that he will

rule the world from a Roman throne is also made clear; and that he will go into perdition is an oft repeated truth, v 11; Rev 19: 20.

The ten kings fulfill the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image, and will have power during the last days of "the times of the Gentiles". They complete the image in which Gentile rule was fully set forth -- from Nebuchadnezzar's golden reign to the iron rule of the man of sin. At the close of this age human government will find expression in ten kingdoms, over which these ten kings will rule for a brief period with the beast. These kings will give full allegiance to the great world leader, the king of kings among men. In doing this they will fulfil the word and will of God, vs 12, 17.

### III. WAR WITH THE LAMB v 14

This astounding truth must be studied in the light of some other Scriptures, such as Ps 2: 4-6; Luke 19: 14; Rev 19: 19. It has reference to the battle of Armageddon, the last conflict on the field of strife among men, Rev 16: 16.

## IV. JUDGMENT OF THE GREAT WHORE vs 16-18

The great city of Babylon, the world's centre of religious corruption, will be destroyed thru human agencies. The political powers will hate this corrupt religious system and will accomplish her overthrow. The dramatic way in which it will be achieved, is the story of the eighteenth chapter.

## DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON

## Chapter 18

In the seventeenth chapter there is given a full description of Babylon; in this chapter her destruction is foretold in dramatic fashion. This is the deepest and most difficult portion of the book. Here is needed "the mind which hath wisdom."

That the destruction of this religious sham is a matter of great moment is seen in the way the Holy Spirit dwells upon the events in detail. The entire eighteenth chapter and six verses of the nineteenth chapter, are needed to tell of the overthrow of Babylon. According to her exaltation will be her debasement; and according to her sins will be her punishment, v 6.

Two things may be seen in clearest light. The chapter treats of the origin, nature and destruction of a material city called Babylon; and it presents at the same time the nature and destruction of a religious system. Interpreting by analogy, we can not fail to find the Spirit's meaning. The holy city, the heavenly Jerusalem, is both a place and a people; a material city and a real populace. It hath foundations, streets of gold, and gates of pearl. It is at the same time a spiritual people—the bride, the lamb's wife, Rev 21: 10.

The false church is a perfect imitation of the true church, and we are not surprised to find one analogous to the other in every important sense. There is then first to be considered,—

#### I. THE LITERAL CITY OF BABYLON

This historic city is a theme of the prophets and is here called "that great city", "that mighty city" vs 10, 16; 18, 19, 20. In order to have before us all the facts there are five steps to be taken.

1. In the first place, Babylon was destroyed according to prophecy, and in that

destruction Jehovah's people were avenged, Jer 51: 54-58.

2. But Babylon will be rebuilt, in order to fulfil prophecy. In the fifth chapter of Zechariah there is a plain statement of the fact that there will be restoration of this ancient city. This is necessary in order that it might be to the world in a false and wicked sense what Jerusalem will be in a true and righteous sense. If Jerusalem will be restored and become the center of moral and religious teaching (Isa 2: 3), Babylon must be restored and become the center of popular and perverted religion. It is freely granted by those who do not hold this view, that vs 10, 16 and 18 of this chapter have reference to Babylon the city of luxury and of lust; of tragedy and of traffic. And since this is conceded, how could the city be destroyed at the last hour of the tribulation, as so dramatically pictured here, if there was no such city in existence? God's word can not be broken. That wicked thing foretold by the prophet will be established in the land of Shinar as an evil imitation of the worship at Jerusalem, Zech 5: 5-11.

3. This restored city will be destroyed at the end of this age, Rev 14: 8; 17: 16; 18: 8. The Spirit dwells upon the fact and the features related to its destruction. There is also careful discrimination between the destruction of the literal city and the religious system called "mystery Babylon". As to the material city, its destruction by human agencies is called its fall, *but the fall of the religious system is something and a great something more than that*. When the hour of judgment strikes for the city in the land of Shinar, the kings of the earth will accomplish her overthrow. The sham and the shame of her doings will merit universal contempt. They will burn her with fire, and thus execute the judgment divinely appointed, Rev 17: 16, 17.

4. The destruction of this city will affect different classes. Much of this chapter occupies us with this feature, and doubtless for the purpose of showing the extent of her wickedness.

(1) Kings will lament over her, vs 9-11.

(2) Merchants will weep and wail over her, and for the reason that no one buyeth their merchandise! Does it not prove that

selfishness blights and curses the life beyond hope? They also weep and wail because "so great riches have come to naught" v 17. This spirit has been in the world since the days of Judas, and will perish only with the passing of all things human.

(3) Mariners will weep and wail over her, vs 17-19.

(4) Apostles and prophets will be avenged in her destruction, vs 20, 24; Rev 19: 2.

(5) It will be a final overthrow. "Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all" v 21.

## II. THE MYSTIC BABYLON

We may speak of Jerusalem as the centre and life of Judaism. It is Judaism fully expressed. And yet Judaism is more than a city. It is a people, and a people sowing beside all waters!

We may think of the church as a city, the heavenly Jerusalem, which is the very embodiment of its life, its laws and its true nature. When the angel calls the bride of Christ "that great city, the holy Jerusa-

lem", he has reference to two things—to a place and a people.—to a place "which hath foundations", and to a people gathered from every class and clime. Since the false church is a perfect imitation of this heavenly city, we must see it as a city which hath foundations in the land of Shinar, and also a people dwelling by many waters. Not the literal city, but the religious system is meant by "the great whore that sitteth upon many waters" Rev 17: 1.

To trace the analogy between the "mystery Babylon" and the mystery of "the one body" is to find the true meaning, for this false church is in every sense an imitation of "the church which is his body".

It will ever be a mystery to the world, because of its esoteric teachings; its subtle methods; its thinly veiled vileness while dealing in holy things; and its ungodly ambitions. Mystery Babylon is Christendom in its last stage, wearing the garb of religion but wicked at heart; professing the principles of the Christ, but practicing the methods of the world. Claiming to trade in the things of the kingdom, but wholly given to traffic in the things of the world, the flesh

and the devil. Its horns are like a *lamb*, but its voice is that of a *dragon!* Rev 13: 11.

This corrupt thing is the “tree” of the parables, grown to vast proportions, in which the birds of every wing have found lodging, Matt 13: 32. Nations have been deceived by her sorceries. Kings have lived deliciously with her. Merchants have profited greatly from her wares, vs 3, 11. As with secret societies, she has made it a very profitable thing to have a place under her sheltering wings.

Always seeking place and power by courting favor with the world, the seers and saints have suffered much at her hand. Who slew the Christ? The Pharisees compassed his death in the name of religion! Who slew the saints and sages of all the centuries? The enemies of truth in the name of religion. “In her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth” v 24. Who will slay the vast multitude of tribulation saints, the martyred white robed company? Babylon, in the name of religion, for Anti-christ, its official head, will be very religious, Rev 6: 11; 13: 7.

### 1. The fall of this false church.

“The Babylon the great is fallen, and is become the habitation of demons, the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird” v 2. The bird in Scripture is a symbol of heavenly, and therefore of religious things; and in both the parable and here it is used to designate the kind of people that find lodgment in this great tree of Christendom.

According to the plain statement of Scripture, the fall of this great system is nothing other than self-destruction. It will perish in its own corruption. Self-seeking; self-indulgence; and selfish ambition, will result in its utter ruin. The fall of this religious system is a fall from grace, from even the thought of moral obligation.

Then the full heritage of the present teaching of the schools thruout the land will be reaped. Man being essentially divine, he can not sin! There is no law to obey but that of his own nature, which means a state of lawlessness and utter abandonment to lust. The woman’s “leaven” in the parable shows plainly how the church is

corrupted by *her own false doctrine*, "till the whole was leavened" Matt 13: 33. There is none can teach like God! Here in a few words, the Master has given us a faithful and forceful picture of Christendom in her present state.

2. The call to come out of her, vs 4, 5; Jer 51: 6. "And I heard a voice from heaven saying, Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" v 4. He that hath the hearing ear will understand this call and heed the solemn warning. As Christendom grows more corrupt the true followers of the Lamb—those who love the truth and have pledged allegiance to their Lord—are hearing this call to separate themselves from her sins and from her plagues. A little less than a century ago (1830) devout and distinguished saints in England believed that they heard the divine call to "come out of her", and these separated ones may be found in every part of the world. "According to your faith be it unto you." Beyond a doubt, this word has a meaning for this Laodician period. Those who truly love the Lord will leave the things offensive to

him. It is necessary if one would follow him fully and win his approval in that day.

3. The day of judgment for Babylon, vs 6-8. The sins of this travesty of divine things reach to heaven, and God will remember her iniquities. He will give her double, because of the nature of her sins. She has sinned against much light; and she has insulted, times without number, his great love. But it is chiefly for the way she has treated his prophets and saints that she will be punished according to the demands of inflexible justice and unbending righteousness. “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord”.

“True and righteous are his judgments, for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his saints at her hand” Rev 19: 1-3.

“Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death and mourning and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her” v 8.

Let it be confessed, these plagues have reference to the destruction of a material

city and to the suffering and death of its inhabitants. That may not be disputed, but is this discipline of a city and people the judgment due this mystic Babylon? Far from it. The punishment due her sins is but thinly veiled thruout this chapter. Literal fire and temporal death, could not balance her account!

The punishment of "mystery Babylon" must be in keeping with her sins. It should be remembered that *every person of this religious system has received the mark of the beast*, and the portion of all such is recorded in Rev 14: 9-12. It is terrible to contemplate.

"The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brim-stone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for-ever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, *and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name*".

Babylon the city will be destroyed with fire; but “mystery Babylon” will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” 2 Thes 1: 9, 10.

### THE CLIMAX AND CONCLUSION

#### Chapter 19

In this chapter we reach the end of the tribulation week. Here is found the glorious climax to which all the preceding events would naturally lead. At the end of chapters 6, 11, 14 and 16, there is given a brief sketch of the events that belong to the moment of his advent. Here he actually comes in all his glory, and all his saints and angels are with him.

There are four important truths to be carefully noted in this chapter,—the worship of the redeemed; the marriage of the Lamb; the return of the Lord to earth; and the great supper of God.

##### I. WORSHIP OF THE REDEEMED VS 1-6

God’s righteous judgments have been poured out upon a rebellious world, and every enemy has been subdued. The king-

dom of darkness has been overthrown, and the Lord God omnipotent reigneth! His righteous judgments have the approval of all the saints. They even call forth universal praise.

1. There is first the praise of "much people" in heaven and the *motive* of their praise is the justice revealed in the judgments of God. "He hath judged the great whore which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand."

2. This praise finds a response in the hearts of the elders and living creatures. They fall down and worship God who sits on the throne, saying "Amen; hallelujah."

3. The leader of the great choir of heaven then calls upon all to join in the chorus—"all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great", and music divine fills the universe! "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth"! What an hour of triumph for Christ and his servants; for righteousness and truth!

## II. MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB vs 7-10

Christ's deathless devotion to his church is the love story of the ages. It is far more romantic and tragic than the most fascinating tale of human fact or fiction. In the past ages it was set forth in type and shadow; in the next age it will be manifested to all the world. "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it", and he will never rest until his blood-bought bride is with him, to share his love and life; his fame and fortune.

This attitude of the Lord toward his own is disclosed in the types. Boaz the mighty man of wealth was a type of the coming Bridegroom. Of him it was said: "The man will not be in rest until he have finished the thing this day", words full of deep and precious meaning. The glorified Man on throne will not be satisfied until he have finished the story of redeeming love this day —this period of patient grace. He is on his Father's throne, expecting, or waiting till his enemies be made his footstool, Heb 10: 13. And when the "day of his power" is come he will return to take possession of his kingdom, and also of his bride. Eager

to have her with himself, he will come “leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills” Cant 2: 8.

This love story may be seen in a series of types in the Old Testament. The first Adam and Eve were types of the Last Adam and his bride, the church. Isaac and Rebecca foreshadowed the same great truth; also Jacob and Rachel, Joseph and Asenath, Boaz and Ruth, David and Abigail. These are pictures painted by fingers divine, showing the intimate and exalted relation Christ sustains to his church; while Solomon and the Shulamite point to the consummated union—the marriage of the Lamb.

In Canticles the unselfishness of Christ’s love is disclosed; also its preciousness and power. “Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it”. This has reference to his deathless uncreated love that swept the shores of time and rose mountain high at the cross. But while its power is seen at the cross, its preciousness is yet to be disclosed to the saints. At the marriage of the Lamb, where neither sin nor Satan can hinder the full revelation of himself, there will be such an unveiling of the sweet love of Jesus as shall lead the

bride to cry, "the half was never told"! What revelations that hour will bring—of ourselves, and of himself! Then the words of Rutherford will voice the experience of every heart,—

I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine,  
He brings a poor vile sinner into his house of  
wine.

I stand upon his merit, I know no safer stand,  
Not e'en where glory dwelleth in Emanuel's land.

1. The bridal gown is mentioned as an important feature, and it is always that. "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints, or the *righteous acts of saints*. The proper clothing for the presence of the holy Father is the robe of divine righteousness which is given to every believer, Rom 3: 22; Isa 61: 10. Nothing less than this would stand the test of the searching gaze of a holy God. But when we appear in the presence of the Bridegroom, it will be in our own righteousness — in the garment of our own weaving! This is a solemn and searching truth. "The righteous

acts of saints". We will be seen just as we are. The real worth of each one will be disclosed. Then it will be manifest the motive with which we served; the measure of zeal; and the amount of effort put into the spiritual life.

A paragraph from the writer's booklet on "The Five Judgments" will help to make clear this truth. "Human deeds are indelibly written in the character which every mortal is building—a life work which goes on unceasingly until the heart, life's engine, throbs no more; and the material with which we build is thought, purpose and deeds. It is a structure that shall endure when chiseled statue and polished monument shall have crumbled to ashes, for it is building for eternity. When all temporal abodes have passed away, we will live on in the house we have reared, in the character we have formed out of life's opportunities and activities."

2. The marriage supper is mentioned as an important feature of that glad hour, v 9. Following the Jewish custom, the marriage supper or marriage feast, will come after the wedding. And while they went to buy

the Bridegroom came (from the wedding); and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage feasts, and the door was shut, Matt 25: 10. The marriage of the Lamb will take place in heaven, and the week of feasts will most likely occur on earth. Does not the Master refer to this when he says: "Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the Kingdom of God" Mark 14: 25.

A common error concerning the marriage supper is this, that believers of this age will be among the invited guests. All the saved of this dispensation belong to the bride, the Lamb's wife, and a bride is never invited to her own wedding! She is the centre of interest and object of admiration on that occasion. "Blessed are they that are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb". Who are these invited guests? The friends of the Bridegroom, such as John the Baptist, John 3: 29. The Old Testament saints will be there as friends. The martyrs of the tribulation will be there. The sealed remnant—the 144,000—will be there to rejoice and be glad that they hear the Bridegroom's voice, and that the hour of his enthronement has come.

3. The "testimony" of Jesus is mentioned here as something separate from the word of God, v 10. Wherein is it different? The word of God is the Old Testament, and the testimony of Jesus is the interpretation he gave to the Scriptures by *his life and his teaching*. Christ lived under the law; he taught under the law, i. e., his teaching was an interpretation of the law; he died to satisfy the claims of a broken law. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy". The prophets wrote under the law, and the burden of their message was the life and laws of that kingdom over which Messiah would reign.

The testimony of Jesus was given on the other side of the cross and had to do with the kingdom, not the church. The spirit of prophecy is the spirit of the law—the spirit of justice and righteousness. The teachings of the Master were ever in accord with that spirit. The burden of his message was the establishment of peace in the earth, on the ground of righteousness and eternal justice, Isa 32: 17. The testimony for this age—the gospel of the grace of God—was given to Paul after the rejection of Israel's Messiah! Dan 9: 26; Jn 1: 11; Gal 1: 12.

## III. THE LORD'S RETURN TO EARTH vs 11-16

“And I saw heaven opened”. This expression occurs seven times in Scripture. Heaven is opened to reveal the divine program for Israel (Ezek 1: 1); and to reveal heaven's pleasure in the perfectly obedient One on earth, Matt 3: 16. Heaven is opened to let Stephen see the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God, waiting for Israel's decision concerning the Holy Spirit (Acts 7: 56); to give Peter instructions concerning the true nature of the church (Acts 10: 11); to show the translation of the church at the end of this age (Rev 4: 1); to reveal the return of Christ to earth (Rev 19: 11); and in the next age heaven will be open, allowing the angels of God to ascend and descend upon the Son of Man when he shall sit on David's throne according to prophecy, John 1: 51; Hosea 2: 21, 22.

This hope of Israel, of the nations and of the groaning creation, is vividly and dramatically presented in the following Scriptures,—

Dan 7: 9-11—King of all kingdoms

Joel 3: 1-17—Conquest of the world

Zech 14: 1-9—Defense of Israel

Matt 25: 31-46—Sifting of the nations

Rev 19: 11-21—Destruction of all enemies.

In Daniel he comes to end Gentile rule in the earth; in Joel, to rebuke the proud nations; in Zechariah, to defend Jerusalem, the city where he has chosen to put his name; in Matthew, to judge the nations as a preparation for his earthly kingdom; and in Revelation, to destroy Antichrist's power and establish peace in the earth.

1. The Lord is first the "Man of War" and then the "Prince of Peace" vs 11-13; Isa 9: 56. Here he is seen as the invincible leader in a righteous war. His vesture is dipped in blood; his eyes are as flame; and on his head are many crowns, which speak of his pre-eminence in every realm.

2. The names given him here are eloquent with meaning. He is called "faithful and true" in contrast with Antichrist, the false and treacherous shepherd, vs 12, 13. His name is called "the word of God," which means that he is the eternal Logos, the embodiment of truth, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. It

also means that all the promises of God concerning the earth are now to be fulfilled. The very purpose of his return to earth is to realize to men all the hopes the Messianic promises have awakened, and in a large and glorious way. Another name given him here is "King of kings and Lord of lords". This title tells of the place the Father has given him in the earth. "Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, — that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" Phil 2: 9-11.

This title indicates his peerless supremacy on every plane. He is head of the church; head of the state; ruler of worlds; King of all kingdoms.

3. His weapons of warfare are named, v 15.

The weapons he will use will make him invincible. "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations". The word of God is quick

and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. Now "his lips like lilies, drop sweet smelling myrrh"; but then with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked, Isa 11: 4; 2 Thes 2: 8. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath and vex them in his sore displeasure, Ps 2: 5.

4. His mission is also stated, vs 11, 15.

"And in righteousness he doth judge and make war". His mission in the earth when he came to Bethlehem was the redemption of a lost world. When he comes in all his glory it will be to rule the world with a shepherd's rod. His first advent was in weakness; his second advent will be in great power. In the first he came to establish heaven's throne; in the second, he will establish righteousness in the earth, v 15; Isa 32: 1; Ps 2: 8, 9.

"This same Jesus shall come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven". His ascension was visible and in power, and so shall his coming be. When he returns to Mount Olivet with all his saints, his first judicial act will be to judge and sift the assembled nations, according to Matt 25: 31-46. This judgment of the living nations

will be a necessary preparation for his earthly reign from David's throne, Joel 3: 12.

#### IV. THE GREAT SUPPER OF GOD VS 17-21

There are four suppers mentioned in the New Testament. The gospel supper (Luke 14: 14); the Lord's supper (1 Cor 11: 20-34); the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev 19: 8); and the great supper of God, the theme of these closing verses. The first three reveal God in grace; the last one assures us that he is a God of judgment.

This slaughter of the wicked in a wholesale fashion is foretold in Ezekiel 39: 17-22; and Zephaniah 1: 7. With the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked, and it will be a mighty host that will fall under his withering scorn in that day! In that hour will God show his utter contempt for men who failed to glorify him, and his regard for the birds that *fulfil the true purpose of their being!*

1. The Lord's armies are mentioned, vs 14, 19.

Of this army of the Lord, it is said that they are "called and chosen and faithful"

Rev 17: 14. Who will share in this conquest of the earth?

In the first place, the church will be with the King. This is clearly stated in the Scriptures.

“And the Lord my God shall come and all the saints with thee” Zech 14: 5.

“To the end he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ *with all his saints*” 1 Thes 3: 13.

The church is clothed with fine linen at the marriage of the Lamb, and the armies which follow him upon white horses are also clothed in fine linen, white and clean, v 14. The church is a part of this linen-clad company who descend to earth with him.

The Old Testament saints are also a part of “the armies of heaven” who go forth with the triumphant Christ. They are not of the church, but they are with the church as friends of the Bridegroom, Heb 12: 23.

The angels will be a part of that great host that will make war upon the enemies of Israel and of Jehovah. It is written: “When the Son of Man shall come in all his glory, and all his holy angels with him.”

The angels will be the reapers in that day. They will gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, Joel 3: 11; Matt 13: 41; Rev 14: 18. These three classes—the angels, the church, and the Old Testament saints—are named in Heb 12: 22-24 as belonging to the heavenly scene.

But there is another group that will add strength and dignity to the army of the Lord. The great white-robed company, the martyrs of the tribulation, will also share in the conquest of the earth. They will return with the King, not to suffer, but to reign; not in weakness but in power. When the thrones of the earthly kingdom are mentioned, it is to say that these brave martyrs shall sit upon them, Rev 20: 4. They suffered for the truth and now they shall reign with the Christ in his kingdom of truth and righteousness.

The mighty host, the mysterious movements and the invincible nature of this army of the Lamb, is described in Joel 2: 1-11; 3: 11.

2. The enemy's forces are a great company, too, and there is not wanting thoro

training and splendid leadership. v 19. We may affirm with confidence that the skill of a Napoleon would allow no favorable comparison with the methods of this world leader of the last days. "And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army" v 19.

It is a supreme moment in human history. A crisis hour. A sublime occasion. An awful climax in the arts of war. The beast and the kings of the earth will march against the holy city for a decisive battle. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! The time has come to decide the question as to who shall be known as the rightful heir to the kingdoms of this world — the prince of this world or the Prince of life.

Sir William Creasy has written a classic on the "Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World," ending with Gettysburg. By unanimous consent, the battle of Verdun will go down in history as the sixteenth decisive battle. There it was evident to all concerned that the unholy purpose of the Ger-

man Kaiser must meet will humiliating defeat. The seventeenth and final decisive battle of the world will be fought on the plains of Esdralon, where so many bloody conflicts have occurred in the past. It is called in Scripture the battle of Armageddon, Rev 16: 16.

Here the Son of God will suddenly come upon the scene to destroy the organized forces of evil, and end forever the custom of war among men. The armies of the great world leader will be a numberless host. The armies of the Lord will be mysterious and mighty, Joel 2: 1-11; Matt 25: 31; Rev 16: 14.

The leaders of earth's militant hosts think of gaining the victory over the foe, but what an unequal contest! At such arrogant pride, amazing conceit and puny strength, God will laugh! "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, saying, let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their chords from us. But he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure" Ps 2: 1-5.

The manner in which Antichrist and his armies will be destroyed, is clearly stated in Scripture. "He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked" Isa 11: 4.

"Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" Ps 2: 9.

The assembled armies, their mad motive, and the inevitable results, are related in such a clear and comprehensive fashion, further comment is unnecessary.

"And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, whose sword proceeded out of his mouth, and all the fowls were filled with their flesh" Rev 19: 17-21; Dan 7: 11, 12.

## THE COMING KING

“Lift up your heads, O weary saints of God,  
For your emancipation draweth nigh!  
Faint not beneath the stress of latter days  
Whose shadows dense upon your spirits lie:  
Tho’ Satan’s powers in all their venom'd wrath,  
Press hard upon the legions of our King,  
Yet impotent are all the demon hosts—  
The Christ advances! Shouts of triumph ring!

“With crowns of thorns displaced by “many crowns”

Blind Israel’s rejected King descends;  
The Lion of the tribe or Judah reigns,  
And ev’ry knee before the Victor bends.  
The graves give up their dead; the crown of life  
Adorns the radiant brows unmarred by care:—  
Lift up your heads, O weary saints of God,  
Rejoice! for in this glory you will share.

“O Christ, our King, we watch with yearning  
hearts

For thy return to this sin-burdened world;  
Thru ages dark and ominous, thy saints  
Have kept the banners of their faith unfurled;  
The martyr ranks are filling; peace has fled; -  
Prophetic notes sound forth their warning clear;

The thrones of earth are crumbling to the dust;—  
O King of earth and heaven,—Thou art near!"

—Louise Umlauf.

### SUBDIVISION 3

## THE KINGDOM FOR WHICH WE PRAY

CHRIST ON DAVID'S THRONE

RIGHTEOUSNESS REIGNING

### Chapter 20

There are five topics that call for prayerful attention in the study of this chapter,—the dethronement of Satan; the enthronement of Christ; the enthronement of the saints; the last revolt; and the judgment of the great white throne.

#### I. DETHRONEMENT OF SATAN VS 1-3

The great arch-fiend, the enemy of human kind, has done his best to thwart the purposes of God; but his efforts, tho he wist it not, that very will and purpose wrought! He spent his fury on the saints and peopled heaven with a mighty host of martyrs. He did his best to establish his authority in the earth and met with overwhelming defeat.

Like Napoleon he lost out, and his day of doom has come.

The angel sent to bind him with chains and thus take his power from him; put him in prison and thus take his liberty from him, must not be taken for the Son of God, and for different reasons. In the first place, the Son is never called an angel in Scripture. Furthermore, he is at the head of all these mighty movements, and would not be running such errands that could be delegated to trusty servants! Then, too, Satan had been defeated by angels in a battle in heaven, and one of these angels "that excel in strength" would be the suitable agent to carry out the divine mandate concerning his imprisonment, Rev 12: 7.

Like the names of Antichrist, the four names given him here cover all his dominant traits,

Dragon—"God of this world"

Serpent—Deceiver

Devil—Diabolus, Destroyer

Satan—Accuser

He is cast into the pit of the abyss for one thousand years, in order to secure for the earth the long promised Sabbath. It is

divinely planned that the seventh period of human history should be a day of rest—for the church; for Israel; and for the weary nations. “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God” Heb 4: 9. As the seventh of the creative days brought rest to God, so the seventh thousand years will bring rest to man! The absence of Satan from the earth will afford rest from selfish strife and the struggle for existence. The weary nations will at last know the rest that righteousness alone can give. They shall dwell in peace under the beneficent rule of the Prince of Peace.

## II. ENTHRONEMENT OF CHRIST vs 4-6

“They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” At last the promised Messiah is on David’s throne, and the government is upon his shoulder, Isa 9: 7. This is man’s day (1 Cor 4: 2); the tribulation period will be Satan’s day; and then the day of Christ, Phil 1: 6. He is now on the Father’s throne. Then he will sit upon his own throne, Rev 3: 21. It is the day of his power, which means the day of peace for the earth, Ps 110: 3.

“And in mercy shall his throne be established, and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging and seeking judgment and hastening righteousness” Isa 16: 5.

### III. ENTHRONEMENT OF THE SAINTS vs 4-6

“And I saw thrones and they that sat upon them, and judgment was given them”.

Who will sit upon these thrones of the world? Certainly not the church, for she is entirely detached from this lower scene. The church will reign over, or above the earth with him, but not on the earth, Rev 5: 10. The earth will not be a suitable place for the glorified saints, for touches of the curse will yet remain, Ezek 47: 11. Furthermore, it is plainly stated that the holy Jerusalem will not descend to earth until after the millennial reign, when the new heaven and new earth appear, Rev 21: 2.

To the disciples the promise was given that they should sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, Matt 19: 28. Positions of dignity and honor will be given to the sons of Israel. Like Daniel, they will excel in the arts of statecraft and diplomacy.

“The King shall reign in righteousness and his princes rule in judgment”. “Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth” Isa 32: 1; Ps 45: 16.

But the redeemed of every tribe and nation will share in the greatness and glory of the earthly kingdom. Not only the martyrs of the Tribulation (v 4), but all who have part in the first resurrection shall have part in the reign of peace. “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection. On such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years” v 6.

#### IMPORTANT GROUPS OF THE REDEEMED

This would seem to be a suitable place to call attention to the different groups in the family of God. We have come to the end of the way. The great conflict between good and evil is ended. The mystery of God is finished, Rev 10: 7. The Prince of Peace has conquered every foe, and is in possession of the field. All who have given him full allegiance, and marched under his banner, will

have place and part in the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. There is the family of heaven and the family of earth, with the saved groups in each. Each of these groups will sustain some important relation to the kingdom for which we pray, Eph 3: 15.

1. In point of time, Israel must be given first place. Seven-eighths of the Bible occupies us with God's covenant people, saved by their Kinsman-Redeemer, and called to distinguished service, Isa 53; 60: 12; Zech 13: 1. They shall be gathered to their land, and enjoy unprecedented prosperity. "And so all Israel shall be saved" Jer 31: 10; Rom 11: 26. Israel will be a happy people when the twelve tribes occupy the land as divinely appointed (Ezekiel 48), and their city and temple rebuilt. "And the name of the city from that day shall be, Jehovah Shammah, the Lord is there".

2. The Old Testament saints, who, like Abraham, saw the city which hath foundations and journeyed toward it with faith, belong to the heavenly scene. These are called "the spirits of just men made perfect" Heb 12: 23. Of the heavenly family,

but with no place in the church, they may be called the friends of the Bridegroom, John 3: 29.

3. The New Testament saints, the saved of this dispensation of the Spirit. The mystery of the "one body" includes all who are saved from Pentecost to Advent, Eph 3: 3-9. These are called the church of the first-born, the bride, the Lamb's wife, Heb 12: 23; 21: 9. Of all the saved groups, this is given the highest place and richest portion in "the kingdom of his dear Son." Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, which means that the church has a special place in redemption. It is the "pearl of great price" for which the Son of Man gave all he had that he might possess it, Matt 13: 45, 46. The hope of the church is the return of her Lord, when she shall be exalted to his position of power and honor, and to a partnership in the affairs of his kingdom.

4. The sealed remnant, the 144,000 of Israel sealed for tribulation service. These sealed ones, 12,000 of each tribe, will preach the gospel of the kingdom during this dark period of chaos and crime, and not without

success. Strange as it may seem to us, the greatest revival of all history will occur in this tragic period, as the result of their preaching. The "great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and people, and tongues" who stand before the throne clothed in white robes, are saved thru their ministry. And how account for the "sheep" when the nations are sifted and judged at the close of the tribulation week? Perhaps millions will stand on his right hand in that hour and hear him say: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world". Every one of them will have been saved thru the preaching of the 144,000 sealed ones! Matt 25: 31-46.

5. The white-robed company, which includes all the martyrs of the Tribulation. These are mentioned five times thruout the book, giving abundant proof of the fact that they are dear to God, Rev 6: 9; 7: 14; 14: 2-5; 15: 2; 20: 4. This white-robed company is the most interesting feature of the tribulation week. Under terrible test, they rise to the highest standard of true character when they refuse the mark of the beast.

Hearing the gospel from the lips of the 144,000, they swear eternal allegiance to the Christ, announce their decision as did the three Hebrew children of old, defy their enemies, and pay the price of their loyalty with their blood, Dan 3: 16-19. They make the supreme sacrifice, and win distinguished place in the kingdom of his dear Son, Rev 20: 4.

How the Holy Spirit loves to keep them before us in this book! He speaks of their devotion, their deeds and of their destiny; of their trials and of their triumphs. Of these it is written: "They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" v 4. Certainly the coming King has no pleasure in cowards. If "his delights are with the sons of men" he has special pleasure in men of heroic stature, who have convictions, courage and real character.

6. Assuming that the Lord's return is in the near future, millions now living will never die! The Scriptures make this very clear. "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all

nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left" Matt 25: 31-33.

The "sheep" here are a part of the living nations. They survive the tribulation judgments and stand before the King at its close. To these the King will say: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Perhaps more than any other portion of the book, this Scripture has been painfully perverted. The new birth is necessary to enter the Kingdom, or even to see it! John 3: 5. And yet how many have taught that these "sheep" are saved on the ground of their works! That would be a flat contradiction of the words spoken to Nicodemus. Here are the facts. These "sheep" are saved thru faith in the message preached by the sealed remnant, and they prove their faith by their works. Christ's "brethren" the Jews have been sorely tried in the fires of human hate. They have been hungry, naked and in prison, and by ministering to them these "sheep" demonstrate the Christian life, and win divine approval, vs 34-40.

In the language of the apostle, "by works their faith is made perfect, for faith without works is dead" Jas 2: 22-26.

These six groups are the fruits of his atoning death, and each group has its place in the kingdom he will establish among men. Old Testament saints, New Testament saints and the martyrs of the Tribulation, will form the heavenly family, and will remain above the scene during the thousand years.

The restored twelve tribes, the sealed remnant (144,000), and the saved of the nations (the "sheep"), will form the family of the redeemed on earth, and enter upon the blessings of the millennial reign.

When the scattered tribes of Israel are gathered to their land and abundantly blessed in temporal and spiritual things; when the church is exalted to distinguished place and service; and vast multitudes of the Gentiles saved and dwelling in peace under his beneficent rule, then he shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied, Isa 53: 11; Acts 15: 14-17.

#### IMPORTANT FEATURES OF HIS GLORIOUS REIGN

Fourteen chapters of this book are given to the events of the brief period of seven

years, and but six verses to the 1000 years of Christ's earthly reign! There are good reasons for this. In the first place, this last book is one of judgment, of the putting down of all evil, and not a history of a kingdom of peace. And further, every feature of the Messianic Kingdom for which we pray, is foretold in the prophetic books, and why should they be repeated here? The burden of the prophets, the one inclusive theme of their message, is the Messiah. They speak of his people, his kingdom, his throne, and his reign. Since every feature of the promised kingdom is given in detail by the seer, it is only necessary to state here in this last book the fact of its advent in briefest fashion.

Jesus spoke of two resurrections—of life and of judgment (Jn 5:29), and Paul affirmed that there would be a resurrection of the just and of the unjust (Acts 24: 15); but it is here, near the close of the book, that we learn of the 1000 years between the two events. The resurrection unto life will occur in the beginning of the millennial reign; the resurrection unto judgment will occur at the end of time—a thousand years later. One is called “the first resurrection”; the

other may be called the last resurrection, v 5.

Heirs of the first resurrection:—

1. Christ the first fruits, 1 Cor 15: 23
2. They that are Christ's at his coming, 1 Cor 15: 23
  - (1) The Old Testament saints, Heb 11: 40.
  - (2) The New Testament saints, 1 Thes 4: 16
  3. The martyrs of the Tribulation, Rev 7: 14; 20: 4
  4. The hosts of Israel who fell in the wilderness, Ezek 37: 12-14; Dan 12: 1-2

Heirs of the last resurrection:—

1. The wicked dead of all ages, vs 5, 12
2. Those who die or are cut off as a matter of discipline during the thousand years, Acts 3: 23; 1 Cor 10: 9

The loss of life for disobedience during the age of righteousness will not necessarily mean the loss of the soul. There will doubtless be a group in this last resurrection who will be saved; hence the reference to the book of life on that occasion, v 15.

The duration of his reign of peace is given. "They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" vs 4, 6. Eden was a perfect picture of Christ's lordship over the earth, and the creative week was a perfect program as to the way it shall be achieved. God worked six days, and man must work six thousand years. He rested the seventh day, and man will also rest from his hard toil during the seventh thousand years. With Satan cast out, it will indeed be a sabbath of rest for the weary peoples of earth! The Jewish Sabbath is said to be a shadow of things to come—of the seventh age of the world's history, when Messiah would touch the nations toward rest and make them dwell in peace under his beneficent rule, Col 2: 16; Heb 4: 8.

With Satan in chains, and the curse lifted, human life will be greatly prolonged. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days, for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. "As the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands" Isa 65: 20-22. All who conform to truth,

and delight in his will, shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years; but one who lives a hundred years without heeding the call of the gospel will be accursed, i. e., cut off, Isa 65: 20. In that age the light will be very clear. The earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea, and there will be no excuse for not yielding full allegiance to the King. Therefore, one overt act of disobedience will mean a forfeiture of life. "It shall come to pass that every soul which will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people" Acts 3: 23; Deut 18: 15.

The hour of his return will usher in the day of his *power*, Ps 110: 4. At his first advent he came as a lamb; at his second advent he will appear as a lion—the Lion of the tribe of Judah. As Redeemer he came in meekness, and was subject to God and man; as "Governor among the nations" he will be clothed with sovereign power. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of man shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day" Isa 2: 11. Having all power in heaven and earth, he will overthrow Gentile government and establish his Kingdom on its

ruins. He will punish the world for their evil and the wicked for their iniquity; he will destroy the oppressor out of the earth, that the man of earth may no more oppress, Ps 10: 18; Isa 13: 11; Dan 2: 34. He will subdue the nations, defend the needy and establish righteousness in the earth, Ps 72: 11, 12; Isa 9: 7.

His reign will be one of *peace*—for a thousand years! His presence on the scene will mean the end of war. There will be war and strife among men so long as there is selfishness and greed in the human heart, but these will pass with the coming of his Kingdom. Human leagues for the enforcement of peace must ever fail, but “He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth” Ps 46: 9. Because he will forbid it, men will learn war no more, Isa 2: 4. Having outgrown sword and spear, they shall be beaten into plowshares and pruning hooks, and thus the implements of war will be used in peaceful pursuits. He made peace by the blood of his cross and reconciled an alien world; and he will never rest until peace is established thruout a redeemed earth. The Prince of Peace loves peace. He lived a peaceful life; he died to make peace in a

discordant world, and he is coming back again to establish peace among men. "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever" Isa 9: 7.

His reign will be one of *purity*. He will purify this lower scene and make it a fit abode for the saints. A pure language will be given the people, from which many modern terms will be omitted! A pure literature will be given the people, in which there will be no place for the cheap and corrupting fiction of the present age. Many people will say: "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for *out of Zion shall go forth the law*, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" Isa 2: 3. All the corruption in polities will be a thing of the past. "His princes shall rule in judgment." Like Daniel and David, those put in high places will rule with honor and dignity; with love and loyalty to the King. The human heart, the home life—the entire so-

cial fabric will be cleansed and lifted to a high plane of morals, such as is taught in the Sermon on the Mount, Matt 5: 20. There will not be one divorce scandal in a thousand years!

His reign will be one of great *prosperity*. The coming King is a true economist and his policies will greatly increase the wealth of the people. All waste of money on war, rum, drugs and lust, will be eliminated, which is no small item. Wine and women have cost the "foolish folk" \$500,000,000 a year! Tobacco comes next as a wasteful habit, costing \$1,200,000,000 per annum. Jewelry and plate labeled as "the waste of vanity and ostentation" is estimated at \$800,000,000. Deducting the pre-prohibition drink-bill, the sinful luxuries of the American people cost them annually \$5,365,000,000! All such wastes will be impossible under the reign of the Messiah. The people will not even desire it. With the curse lifted from the ground, the earth will give bountiful harvests. The plowman will overtake the reaper, so quickly will the ground respond to man's toil. The desert shall blossom as a rose, Isa 35: 1; Amos 9: 13.

## IV. THE LAST REVOLT vs 7-10

After one thousand years of universal subjection to the great King, Satan will be loosed from his prison house and will go forth to deceive the nations of the earth, and gather them together to battle. It is an amazing thing that after many centuries of the beneficent rule of the Prince of Peace the arch-fiend should be able to marshall a mighty host who are willing to openly defy Christ's authority. But it is consistent with man's nature, and a faithful comment on the perverseness of the human heart that he should respond, then, as now, so readily to Satanic power and plot.

This great host will go up against the "beloved city" — Jerusalem — as Anti-christ's armies had done a thousand years before, thinking to dethrone the King and usurp the Kingdom. But they will be like stubble before the flame. Fire from heaven will devour them and the devil that deceived them shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are, to be tormented day and night forever and ever v 10. Here is the end of man's foe, and also the end of strife in the earth.

## V. THE GREAT WHITE THRONE VS 11-15

In the writer's booklet on "The Five Judgments" a careful study of this judgment is given. A brief statement of the facts will be given here.

This last act in the drama of human history is the most solemn event of the ages. It will be conducted before the great white throne at the close of the Messianic reign, at the end of time.

### 1. The Scene, v 11.

Looking at this sublime sketch given by seraphic John, one is impressed with the grandeur of the scene and its setting amid the shaking of worlds. Hoary time has run its course. God in redemption has been fully revealed, and God in government is about to complete his work. The church has been exalted to distinguished place and service. Israel has been restored and greatly blessed. The nations have been judged and have enjoyed the benefits of Christ's peaceful reign. The *last revolt* has been punished and Satan has been cast into the lake of fire. Now the entire scene is to be transferred from the sphere of time into the eternal world and placed under new laws

and conditions. There remains one more act that belongs to the realm of the finite, and that is the “judgment of the last day”.

The great white throne is set out in infinite space and the Son of Man, to whom all judgment is given, sits as arbiter or human destinies, John 5: 22. To the call of final trumpet the dead rise from earth and sea, from Hades and the grave. The old earth passes away, to give place to a kingdom that cannot be removed. The “day of the Lord” will close with a whole world in conflagration. Mountains will be lit like torches, whose flames will be fed with internal fuel. Cities will be swept with flaming tempest, like Sodom and Gomorrah. The elements will melt with fervent heat. “The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” 2 Peter 3: 10, 12.

The scene is overwhelming in its grandeur; fearful in its wreckage of times’ institutions; dreadful in devouring flame.

## 2. The subjects of judgment.

Those who are summoned here, the subjects of judgment, are mentioned as a single class. They are plainly the wicked dead of all the ages.

The church is not among this company, for she has already enjoyed a millennium of exalted service. Israel is not in question here, for her tribes have long since been dwelling in their allotted land. The nations are not meant, for they were judged at the beginning of the reign of peace. Only *the wicked dead* are summoned here,—the impenitent of all ages, who rejected the divine message of grace and are therefore reserved for this solemn occasion.

The great company that assemble here are gathered from earth and sea—from the cities of the dead. From Cain down to the end of time they have remained in the silent tomb. They did not hear the trumpet of God in the resurrection of the just, for no uncircumcised ear shall hear the call intended to awaken the redeemed of the Lord.

### 3. The searching test.

Notice further, the searching test appointed for this important occasion. “The books were opened,” referring to heaven’s record of human deeds. The books have been kept by angelic chronicler and human deeds recorded with divine precision. Human

biographers may pass over sinful and selfish deeds of men who have risen to fame and fortune, recording only deeds good and great for posterity to read and praise; but no such record is kept in that other world where truth reigns and is worshiped.

Another record of human deeds is kept on memory's scroll, which will remain a part of our eternal possessions. Such are the laws of mind that nothing is ever forgotten. Were there no divine tribunal, memory would forever bring one's deeds before the throne of conscience to be punished with unmitigated remorse and anguish.

But there is no standard in man sufficiently high for the measurement of human motive and conduct. Far beyond the highest conception of life, far beyond the throne of conscience is the exalted throne of divine justice, before which every creature shall stand and be judged by him who is worthy to sit upon it. Hence we read of the mighty host who are raised up by Omnipotence before the great white throne to face the record of the open books. One by one they pass in solemn review before the searching gaze of a holy God to receive a sentence

from which there is no appeal and pass to their final doom.

From those dizzy heights, with nothing now beneath their feet, they descend into the pit of the abyss—into starless night forever. Shut out from heaven, and how much that will mean! Separated from God—a greater calamity! Shut in with demons—in the regions of death and despair. Here the voice of redeeming love is hushed forever, and therefore they are lost, irretrievably lost, forever lost!

Two views are held as to the second death. One is this, that the fire is literal fire and will consume the body in a few moments, leaving the human spirit a disembodied ghost, out on life's sea without a path or chart or compass; far from home and therefore without love, rest or peace; a wandering star for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever, Jude 13.

The other view held by eschatologists does not lend itself to such a literal interpretation. It regards the fire as a symbol of God's holiness—of divine wrath—an unquenchable flame, which would mean endless torment. This theory is supported by

such texts as these: "Our God is a consuming fire." "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Granting either theory, it is a most solemn and searching truth!

SUBDIVISION 4  
THE ETERNAL STATE  
Chapters 21 and 22  
A PERFECT PLACE

Chapter 21

Time has run its course and finished its mission of carrying forward everything that is deathless to a perfect state. Thru the slow processes of time God has accomplished his purposes of grace among men. His work in redemption has been finished and his plan of government for the world is now to find expression on a perfect moral plane. The judgment of the great white throne is the closing event of time, and we are now ushered into the eternal world where all things are made new. Things which are seen are temporal, but the things not seen are eternal. The shadow gives place to the substance and the transient to

that which can never pass away. The old world has passed away, and a new world is created. The old order gives place to the new order where all is divine. The veil is lifted at last and the spiritual world is ushered into view.

In the twenty-first chapter emphasis is given to a *perfect place* in the eternal world, while in the last chapter a *perfect state* is presented. The physical heavens and earth have perished. “The heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up”. “Behold I make all things new”!

#### I. THE NEW HEAVEN vs 1, 23; 22: 5

In this new world there is no need for the sun or moon, neither do the stars keep their nightly vigils any more, for “there is no night there.” God and the Lamb take the place of the light of the sun and moon, and the saints will take the place of the stars! “They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever” Dan 12: 3

## II. THE NEW EARTH vs 1-8 ; 22: 2

Everything of time will be tested with fire and out from the conflagration of worlds will emerge a new earth "wherein dwelleth righteousness". The taint of the old world will never touch the new. All the results of the curse—suffering, slavery and separation from God—shall be forever ended. God will dwell with men as in the beginning, before sin entered that fair paradise. All the fruits of sin—sorrow and tears, pain and death — shall have passed away. In this new earth there will be new life, new laws, new light and new labor. "Behold I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered nor come into mind" Isa 65: 17.

## III. THE NEW CITY vs 9-27

During the kingdom age the heavenly city is in mid-air, shedding its light and glory over a redeemed earth. But now at last heaven and earth are to be perfectly united, with "one law and one element". The new earth will be a suitable abode for the saints, and John sees the holy city, the new Jerusa-

lem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, vs 2, 10.

Rome is called “the eternal city”, and while she is still great in her splendid ruins the only element that will outlive the wreckage of time is the memory of her wickedness! There is only one metropolis deserving of such a distinguishing name, and that is the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, Heb 11: 10. Seven things concerning this city are disclosed in the text,—

1. First, its *situation*. During the thousand years of Christ’s reign from David’s throne, this city will be in the heavenlies, just above the earthly city; but in the eternal state it will descend into the new order and become the centre of interest and the great metropolis of the new earth. There are two reasons why we believe that the “bride the Lamb’s wife” is above the scene during the thousand years. For one thing, the earth will not be a fit place for her. The curse will not be wholly removed, and it would not be a suitable sphere for glorified saints. And further, it is plainly stated

that the heavenly Jerusalem descends from God, out of heaven, after the millennial reign, vs 2, 10.

2. The *size* of this city. The heavenly city that will descend to the new earth far exceeds the Jerusalem of millennial fame in extent and glory. The earthly city will be 9 miles square; the heavenly Jerusalem will be 1500 miles cube! Its length and breadth and height are equal. Like Nebuchadnezzar's city which he built for his young bride, this will be street above street, garden above garden, paradise above paradise. One will have to travel half the distance across the continent to cover the length of it, or the height of it! For the glorified saints, traveling upward will be as easy and natural as moving forward! The city and the people will be entirely suited to each other, v 16.

3. The *symbolism* of this city. The builder of it is God, and we may be sure that it will be a real and substantial piece of work. It hath foundations, and it will also have a superstructure. This city will be a real place; the gold will be real gold; the walls will be real walls, else how have gates! The

material will be just as real as the things of sense, but far superior to that of earth. It is well to remember that a city is a place as well as a people, vs 18, 19; Heb 11: 10.

4. The *sinlessness* of this city. This feature is given special emphasis in this chapter. It is a prepared place for a prepared people. The lines are keenly drawn as to who shall enter this city of fadeless light, the “home of the soul”. “There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life” v 27. The principle of exclusion finds apt illustration here. *Heaven would be worse than hell for an uncleaned sinner!* For this reason we are not surprised to find it written concerning this city: “Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderer, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie”. A careful study of the list of those disqualified for citizenship reveals the fact that nothing *unclean* and nothing *untrue* shall enter that city of gold and pearl, vs 8, 27; Rev 22: 15.

5. The *sanctuary* in this city. The holy places made with hands have had their day

and cease to be. The shadow will give place to the substance; the temporal to the eternal. "And I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it". They are the place of worship and also the object of worship! v 22; 1 John 4: 16. Then, as now, but in a truer sense, God will be the dwelling place of his saints, and at the same time the object of adoration and of praise. "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God", which means that he is our dwelling place as well as the object of admiration and adoring wonder.

6. The *service* of this city. The worship of God will be the chief feature of that glorified life; but life will mean more than that. There will be waiting on God; worship, and also work. This is but the vestibule to life indeed. This temporal life is a preparation for a higher state of existence, and a higher order of service, a service associated with ages yet unborn. The real and specific ministry of the church begins with the enthronement of Christ in the day of his power, and will continue thru the eternal years, v 3; Rev 5: 9-14; 22: 3.

7. The *sacredness* of this city. God is here with men, as in the beginning, and he will dwell with them, as friend with friend. He is the life of that city where all is divine. He is the light of that perfect scene. "The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof". His unhindered love will make life rich and radiant, full and free. Men love liberty as they love life, and yet how few have even discovered its true meaning! True liberty is obedience to law, and love is the fulfillment of law, of all law; therefore love is the secret of liberty, the only way to real freedom. When one rises to the plane where love is the only law, the soul's complete emancipation is realized; its powers fully expressed. This will be the experience of all who reach that city of fadeless light. God's presence makes heaven what it is—a place of perfect *holiness* and perfect *happiness*; of perfect *purity* and of perfect *peace*, vs 3, 23.

Israel will be next to the church in position and in importance. "The first shall be last and the last first". The three divisions of the race will remain distinct,—the

church, Israel and the Gentiles, 1 Cor 10:32. "The nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it" vs 24-26.

My Father's house on high,  
Home of my soul, how near  
At times, to faith's foreseeing eye,  
Thy golden gates appear!  
Ah; then my spirit faints  
To reach the land I love,  
The bright inheritance of saints,  
Jerusalem above!

### A PERFECT STATE

#### RIGHTEOUSNESS DWELLING

#### Chapter 22

The last chapter of Revelation is concerned with the things found in the first chapter of Genesis, and thus the harmony of truth is disclosed. Eden was a picture of God's plan for a perfect moral universe, and the Bible is a history of that purpose and plan,—a history of its beginnings, its foes, its triumphs, and final establishment

in the earth according to the original pattern. His enemies, tho they wist it not, God's very will and purpose wrought.

In Genesis the living waters flow from the heart of Eden; in Revelation the river of life "clear as crystal" flows from under the throne. In Genesis the tree of life is the centre of the picture; in Revelation the leaves of the same tree are for the healing of the nations. In Genesis the serpent enters upon the scene; in Revelation he is cast out forever. In Genesis paradise is lost; in Revelation it is more than restored. The story is one and all Scripture is necessary to its divine completeness.

The last chapter occupies us with three things—a restored paradise; the testimony of the angel; and the testimony of Jesus.

1. In the description of a perfect state, seven features are named, vs 3-5. Seven is the number of divine completeness, and here it is used to fully express the divine ideal. In this ideal state there will be,—

1. Perfect cleansing—"no more curse"
2. Perfect government — "the throne of God"

3. Perfect service — “His servants shall serve him”
4. Perfect communion — “they shall see his face”
5. Perfect holiness—“His name shall be in their foreheads”
6. Perfect state—“no night there”
7. Perfect glory—“the glory of God did lighten it, v 5; 21: 23.

God in government is working toward a perfect moral universe; God in redemption is lifting that universe to a high spiritual plane, where evil as an experience can never be known. In these few verses we get a glimpse of a perfect moral realm—the highest state of existence where all is divine. Here redemption gets its full and largest meaning. Every discordant element has been eliminated. God's life and light; his love and laws are fully expressed. Here, at last, God is All in All.

## 2. The testimony of the angel, vs 8-11.

The angel testifies to the faithfulness of these revelations, that they are from God, and the time of fulfillment is near at hand.

And further, he assures John that he is not an object of worship but a fellow servant—one who had lived, suffered and served in this vale of tears, and now promoted to distinguished ministry. The fixed and permanent state of this eternal world is revealed in his final words: “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still”.

### 3. The testimony of Jesus, vs 12-21.

The last words of Jesus are words of warning concerning his return. Two things are given special emphasis—*obedience* and *rewards*.

“Behold I come quickly. Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book” v 7.

“And behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” v 12.

In verse 16 there is given a restatement of chapter 1, verse 1. The revelation given to him by the Father was sent to the churches thru angelic messenger. He again refers to his return to earth. The root and

offspring of David has reference to his relation to Israel as their King — the rightful heir to David's throne. As bright and morning Star, he will come for the church—just before the break of day!

With that solemn, searching hour of his return in full view, he gives the most gracious and generous gospel invitation recorded in the New Testament—an offer that leaves every man without excuse, v 17. It is a five-fold invitation,—

The Spirit says come!

The bride says come!

The believer says come!

The thirsty may come!

Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

After a solemn warning against trifling with this Revelation—taking from it or adding to it—he again mentions his speedy return, when saint and sinner shall stand before him to hear his “well done” or “I never knew you; depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire”. Before the judgment seat of Christ the “well done” will be heard. In

the judgment of the living nations, "depart from me" will fill many a soul with infinite despair.

The hope of Israel is the return of their Messiah who will restore them to their rightful place among the nations of the earth and give to them the promised kingdom. The hope of nations is peace, when they shall learn war no more and when strife shall cease among men.

But the hope of the church centers in a person—in the return of her absent Lord, when she shall see him face to face, and know as she could not now, his unhindered love. Therefore the fitting and final word of the Revelation is an inspired response from the church to his promise of a speedy return—a response that voices the sincere desire of every redeemed soul—"Even so, come Lord Jesus"!

I can almost hear his footfall  
On the threshold of the door;  
And the heart, the heart is yearning  
To be with him evermore.





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